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*De Re Poetica:*  
O R,  
**REMARKS**  
UPON  
**POETRY.**  
WITH  
**CHARACTERS**  
AND  
**CENSURES**  
OF THE  
**Most Considerable Poets,**  
WHETHER  
ANCIENT or MODERN.

Extracted out of the Best and Choicest *Criticks*.

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By Sir *Thomas Pope Blount*.

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L O N D O N,

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TO THE  
RIGHT HONOURABLE  
*John Earl of Mulgrave,*  
Knight of the Most  
NOBLE ORDER  
OF THE  
GARTER.

My Lord, 128747

**W** *Hoever looks into the History of the  
first Ages of the World, will find,  
that nothing ever had a more general  
esteem amongst Mankind than Poetry. Poets  
were then dignified with the highest, and most  
Magnificent*

## The Dedication.

*Magnificent Titles, as the Civilizers of Men, the Preachers of Vertue, and the great Assestors of Morality. Hence therefore it was, that the Grecians did in a manner Deifie their Poets, stiling them ποιηται, Makers or Creators, which imported a sort of Divineship in 'em: And how great a Deference and Veneration the Romans had for those of this Profession, may sufficiently be inferr'd, from those proud and noble Structures, their Theatres, and Amphitheatres, Built not for the Use of their Divines, Orators, or Philosophers, but for their Poets. 'Tis true, my Lord, in process of time this Noble Art became much sullied, and impair'd; as things most excellent are aptest to degenerate; but this is no more an Argument against Poetry, than Sects and Heresies were against Primitive Christianity. The Divine Plato then (as some were pleased to call him) might very well have spar'd that severe Censure, of Banishing Poets out of his Commonwealth; and the rather, because among none of their Writings, were there to be found, such Lewd and Obscene Discourses, as in his Phedrus and Convivium; So that, upon a fair hearing, even the Philosopher himself, wou'd with more justice have deserv'd the Outlawry.*

My

## *The Dedication.*

*My Lord,*

Had I nothing at all of Inclination to this Address, as I hope *Your Lordship* will easily believe I have a great deal, yet I do not know, whether I ought not to have made it out of meer Policy. 'Tis certain, *my Lord*, You are a very dangerous Reader; a Writer therefore, who has but too much reason to apprehend Your Judgment, is bound in prudence to take You off if Possible. 'Tis not that I look upon a *Dedication* as a *Bribe*; but I find that sometimes, when we have an idle Present made us, which 'tis impossible to conceal, we are apt to be very favourable, and counterfeit a Value of the thing we perhaps secretly despise, rather than own to the World, that any has been so hardy to make us an Offering of what we should think *little*.

But however this be, *Your Lordship* has been before-hand with me, and so much to my advantage, as to render such a Consideration wholly needless: Already You have indulg'd this *Piece*, and allowing it for *useful*, have given it the great  
Character.

## *The Dedication.*

Character desir'd to satisfy the *Author's* Ambition. For as it is entirely a *Collection*, wherein I have nothing to answer for, or hope any thing from, but the Choice and Distribution of the Matter; if I have but made a profitable one, and employ'd my pains beneficially for the World, 'tis all I had to pretend to. After this, *my Lord*, I shall make You no excuses for the Honour I do my self in this *Dedication*; And if in it I seem any thing Vain or Presuming, I am contented so to do, provided I may find the Justice to have it thought at the same time, that 'tis the good Opinion, not of *my self*, but of *Your Lordship*, that has made me so.

Some perhaps who may not think so favourably of this Undertaking, as *Your Lordship* wou'd appear to do, will be apt to say, I am in an Error all this while, and very fondly have mistaken that for *Your Lordship's Judgment*, which was but Your Complement. For both our sakes, *my Lord*, I am willing to hope it is not so; but if it really is, and I am indeed deceiv'd in this Particular, then *Your Lordship* must acknowledge, I have taken care how-  
ever

## *The Dedication.*

ever to revenge my self handsomely, and that I could not have punish'd you better; than in presenting You with the *Trifle*; which You only *seem'd* to approve.

Such as it is, *my Lord*, 'tis perfectly devoted to You. You will find it the easier perhaps to entertain it somewhat kindly, as it is intended at least to do Service to an *Art*, which 'tis well known, is *Your Lordship's* Favourite. Nor indeed do I wonder at it. For is it not Natural, and would not any Man be fond of a *Game*, which he play'd at so well, as always to come off a *Winner*?

I wou'd not, nor wou'd I be thought to flatter; but I think I may say without it, that as no People, perhaps, since the *Old Romans*, have carried *Poetry* so high in all Points as the *English*, so, that those who have engag'd of the *better Rank*, have particularly signaliz'd themselves. *Poetry* which to some Few has been a very good *Wife*, has yet in general been a better *Mistress*; And the *Gentlemen*, her *Lovers*, have found kinder Treatment, than the *Traders*, her *Husbands*. Methinks *She* appears with them in better Humour, and more

## *The Dedication.*

more easie; There's more of *Nature* in the Business, and she seems to grant her Favours with greater Willingness. Indeed the Wit of the Men, is like the Beauty of the Women, of *Quality*; whose Features may be the same as other People's; but then there's something of *Fine*, something of *Free*, something of *Lively* in the *Air*, that makes a very agreeable Distinction. In this *Dividend* of Praise, *Your Lordship's* Stock of Merit entitles You to one of the largest shares. I will not drive it further. Among so many handsome *Muses*, 'twould scarce be civil to determine the Preeminence. I say *so many*, and 'tis for *Your Lordship's* credit that there are so many. One Wou'd not value much the Reputation of a good Face, where the general Deficiency that Way wou'd make a very Moderate one be admir'd. But in a *Nation* of *Beauty*, to be in the first Rank of the *Fair*, is indeed a *Glory*.

Thus, *my Lord*, You have serv'd in the *Poetick Army* with Honour; But then You have given us Lessons of *Discipline* and *Conduct* too. *Poetry* is doubly oblig'd to *Your Lordship* for some of the *best Rules*, as well  
as

## The Dedication.

as one of the most *shining Examples*. She is indebted yet further; She owes You not only what You have done Your self, but, in part, what has been done by another too. I cannot say You brought her a *new Lover*, but You brought an *Old one* on *afresh*. For I take it to be more than probable by the Beginning of that *Poem*, which I will not repeat, that the *Essay* on *Translated Verse* was perfectly occasion'd by the *Essay* on *Poetry*. I know not what *Your Lordship* thinks of this; but to be but Just to my Lord *Roscommon* we must conclude, That he was *too great a Master* to be provok'd, and set a *Work* by any One, who was not a *Great One* too.

With such good Inclinations and after such good Offices done to *Poetry*, give me leave, *my Lord*, once more to offer You what is here endeavour'd in its *Favour*. It has indeed a publick Design, but it has not that alone. We who make *Books*, are like Gentlemen who make *Balls*; Which, though intended for the Entertainment of the Town, use yet to have a more immediate Relation to some One of the *Fair Ladies*. If therefore what is now expos'd to

*The Dedication.*

the World, may be of any Relish to *Your*  
*Lordship*, 'tis the utmost Ambition of him  
who is,

(*My Lord*)

*Your Lordships*

*Most Devoted, and Obliged*

*Humble Servant.*

Thomas Pope Blount.

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THE



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*De*

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*De Re Poetica :*

O R,

REMARKS

U P O N

POETRY.

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*Concerning the Antiquity of Poetry.*

**A**RISTOTLE divides all Poetry, in relation to the Progress of it, into *Nature without Art ; Art begun ; and Art compleated.*

Mr. Dryden tells us, That *Mankind*, even the most Barbarous, have the Seeds of Poetry implanted in them.

The first *Specimen* of it was certainly shewn in the Praises of the *Deity*, and Prayers to him ; And as they are of *Natural Obligation*, so, says *Dryden*, they are likewise of *Divine Institution*. Which *Milton* observing, introduces *Adam* and *Eve*, every Morning adoring God in *Hymns* and Prayers. The first Poetry was thus begun, in the Wild Notes of Natural Poe-

try, before the Invention of Feet and Measures. See **Dryd.** *Dedic.* before Juvenal, pag. 17.

*Rapin* observes, That, since *Linus*, *Orpheus*, and *Eumolpus* were famous for their Poems, before the Trojan Wars; those are certainly mistaken, who date Poetry from that time; I rather (says he) incline to their Opinion, who make it as old as the World it self; which Assertion as it ought to be understood of Poetry in general, so especially of Pastoral, which, according to *Scaliger*, was the most Ancient kind of Poetry, and resulting from the most Ancient way of living. *Rap. de Carmine Pastorali.*

*Theophilus Gale* remarks, That it is generally affirm'd by the Learned, that Poesie was the most Ancient of all Artificial Literature, especially amongst the Grecians; and we have for it the Testimony of *Strabo*, lib. 1. where he undertakes to prove, that Prose is only an imitation of Poesie, &c. Thus also *Vossius* (*de Histor. Græcis*, lib. 1. cap. 1. pag. 7.) asserts and proves, That the Greek Historians and Philosophers were after the Poets. So also *Jackson* (on the Authority of the Scripture) gives it as from unquestionable Antiquity, that all other set Speech, whether Historical or Rhetorical, was but the Progeny of Poesie, falling in latter times from its wonted State. And indeed (says *Gale*) it's evident from the Thing it self, that all the ancient Learning of the Grecians, both History, Morality, Philosophy, and Theologie, was delivered in Poesie. Hence *Orpheus*, and other Poets were anciently stil'd *Διδάσκαλοι*, Teachers; because they taught Men Theologie, and Morality, &c. Whence also the Ancient Discourses of the Philosophers were stiled *Ἀσματα*, Songs, &c. because they deliver'd their Precepts of Philosophy in Verse. So *Pythagoras*, and the rest of the Philosophers of his Sect: yea, among  
the

the *Latins*, *Carmina* were us'd for *Moral Precepts*.  
**Theoph. Gale's** Court of the *Gentiles*.

Sir *William Temple* says, *Poetry*, he thinks, is generally agreed, to have been the first sort of Writing, that has been us'd in the World, and in several Nations to have preceeded the very Invention or Usage of *Letters*. This last, says he, is certain in *America*, where the first *Spaniards* met with many Strains of *Poetry*, and left several of them Translated into their Language; which seem to have flow'd from a true *Poetick* Vein, before any *Letters* were known in those Regions. The same is probable of the *Scythians*, the *Greeks*, and the *Germans*. *Aristotle* says, the *Agathyrsi* had their Laws all in *Verse*; and *Tacitus*, that the *Germans* had no *Annals* nor *Records* but what were so; and for the *Grecian Oracles*, delivered in them, we have no certain account when they began, but rather reason to believe it was before the Introduction of *Letters* from *Phœnicia* among them. *Pliny* tells it, as a thing known, that *Pherecides* was the first who writ *Prose* in the *Greek Tongue*, and that he liv'd about the time of *Cyrus*; whereas *Homer* and *Hesiod* liv'd some hundred of years before that Age; and *Orpheus*, *Linus*, *Musæus*, some Hundreds before them: And of the *Sybils*, several were before any of those, and in *Times* as well as *Places*, whereof we have no clear *Records* now remaining. What *Solon* and *Pythagoras* writ, is said to have been in *Verse*, who were something older than *Cyrus*; and before them, were *Archilochus*, *Simonides*, *Tyrtæus*, *Sappho*, *Stesichorus*, and several other *Poets* famous in their times. The same thing is reported of *Chaldea*, *Syria*, and *China*; and among the ancient *Western Goths* (our *Ancitors*) the *Runick Poetry* seems to be as old as their *Letters*; and their Laws, their *Precepts* of

Wisdom, as well as their Records, their Religious Rites, as well as their Charms and Incantations, to have been all in *Verse*.

Among the *Hebrews*, and even in *Sacred Writ*, the most *Ancient*, is by some Learned Men esteem'd to be the Book of *Job*; and that it was written before the time of *Moses*; and that it was a Translation into *Hebrew*, out of the old *Chaldæan* or *Arabian* Language. Now I think it is out of Controversie, that the Book of *Job* was written Originally in *Verse*, and was a Poem upon the Subject of the Justice and Power of God, and in Vindication of his Providence. But if we take the Books of *Moses* to be the most *ancient* in the *Hebrew* Tongue, yet the *Song* of *Moses* may probably have been written before the rest; as that of *Deborah*, before the Book of *Judges*, being Praises sung to God, upon the Victories or Successes of the *Israelites*, related in both. And I never read the last, says Sir *Will. Temple*, without observing in it, as True and Noble Strains of Poetry and *Picture*, as in any other Language whatsoever, in spight of all Disadvantages from Translations into so different Tongues, and common Prose. If an Opinion of some Learned Men both *Modern* and *Ancient* could be allow'd, that *Esdra*s was the Writer or Compiler of the first Historical Parts of the *Old Testament*, though from the same Divine Inspiration as that of *Moses* and the other Prophets, then the *Psalms* of *David* would be the first Writings we find in *Hebrew*; and next to them, the *Song* of *Solomon*, which was written when he was young, and *Ecclesiastes* when he was old; so that from all sides, both *Sacred* and *Prophane*, it appears that Poetry was the first sort of Writing, known and used in the several Nations of the World.

It may seem strange, I confess, says Sir *Will. Temple*, upon the first Thought, that a sort of Style so regular and so difficult, should have grown in use, before the other so easie and so loose; But if we consider, what the first end of *Writing* was, it will appear probable from Reason as well as Experience; For the True and General end, was but the *Help* of *Memory*, in preserving that of *Words* and of *Actions*, which would otherwise have been lost, and soon vanish away, with the Transitory Passage of Humane Breath and Life. Before the Discourses and Disputes of *Philosophers* began to busie, or amuse the *Græcian* Wits, there was nothing Written in *Prose*, but either Laws, some short Sayings of Wise Men, or some Riddles, Parables, or Fables, wherein were couch'd, by the *Ancients*, many Strains of Natural or Moral Wisdom and Knowledge; and besides these, some short Memorials of Persons, Actions, and of Times.

Now 'tis obvious enough to conceive, says Sir *Will. Temple*, how much easier all such *Writings* should be Learnt and Remembred, in *Verse* than in *Prose*, not only by the Pleasure of Measures and of Sounds, which gives a great Impression to *Memory*, but by the Order of Feet which makes a great Facility of tracing one Word after another, by knowing what sort of Foot or Quantity must necessarily have preceeded or followed the Words we retain, and desire to make up.

This made *Poetry* so necessary, before *Letters* were Invented, and so convenient afterwards; and shews, that the great Honour and general Request, wherein it has always been, has not proceeded only from the Pleasure and Delight, but likewise from the Usefulness and Profit of *Poetical* Writings. Sir *Will. Temple's* *Essay of Poetry*, pag. 23, 24, 25, &c.

## Poetry commended.

**T**He Grecians, to shew the high Veneration they had for their *Poets*, call'd 'em *Makers* or *Creators*, which denoted a *Divineship* in 'em: And the *Romans*, to express the great Honour they had for *theirs*, styl'd 'em *Prophets*. Nor (indeed) is it easie to distinguish between the *Prophets* and *Poets* of *Israel*. For what is *Jeremy's Lamentation*, but a kind of *Sapphick Elegy*? And *David's Psalms* are not only *Poems*; but *Songs*, *Snatches*, and *Raptures* of a *flaming Spirit*.

Mr. *Samuel Woodford* tells us, That if we consider *Poesie* in her first Institution, e're she became a common Prostitute to Lust, Flattery, Ignorance, and Ambition, we shall find her alone acknowledged as the Sovereign Princess of the Civiliz'd World, and behold her from her Throne giving Laws, not only to their *Religion* and *Policy*, but also to their *Manners*. Her Court was esteem'd the proper and only School of *Vertue*, to which the greatest Princes form'd theirs, and under her Custody alone was kept seal'd that Fountain, whence all the profitable Instructions of Life were to be drawn. *Philosophy* it self was a thing of no use, and destitute of Arms, till *She* supply'd them; nor durst it appear in the World without the easie Chain of *Verse*, in token of Submission to her, for its *Pass-port*. And when afterward the *Porch* and *Academy* by main force brake it off, the strictest Precepts of the most Rigid Sect, as to the regulating of *Manners*, came infinitely short of those Examples, which she exhibited on her Theatres. The same may be said of almost all other Arts, that from *Her* they receive their Birth and Vigour. Neither was this



this Divine Mistress less courteously receiv'd into the Camp, where her *soft Numbers* were with pleasure heard amidst the confused noise of Arms. Hence mighty Generals had the best Instruction both for their Conduct and Valour, and were encouraged by the Records of Antiquity, which some Poet had faithfully preserved, to do themselves famous Acts, worthy the like Praise of Posterity. 'Such was Poesie of Old, with a Command as absolute, and unconfi'd, as her Dominions, and always found either serving at the *Altars*, or of *Counsel Royal* to the greatest Princes. **Sam. Woodford's** *Pref. to his Paraphrase upon David's Psalms.*

*Rapin* remarks, That the true Value of *Poetry* is so little known, that scarce ever is made a true Judgment of it. 'Tis the Talent of Wits only, that are above the Common Rank, to esteem of it according to its Merit: and one cannot consider, how *Alexander, Scipio, Julius Cæsar, Augustus*, and all the Great Men of Antiquity have been affected therewith, without conceiving a Noble Idea of it. Indeed, *Poesie*, of all *Arts*, is the most Perfect: for the Perfection of other *Arts* is limited; but this of *Poesie* has no Bounds. **Rap. of Poesie, Part 1. Sect. 1.**

Sir *William Temple* says, that, for his part, he does not wonder, that the famous *Dr. Harvey*, when he was reading *Virgil*, should sometimes throw him down upon the Table, and say, *He had a Devil*; nor that the Learned *Meric Casaubon*, should find such Charming Pleasures and Emotions, as he describes, upon the reading some parts of *Lucretius*; that so many should cry, and with down-right Tears, at some Tragedies of *Shakespeare*; and so many more should feel such Turns or Curdling of their Blood, upon the reading, or hearing some excellent Pieces of *Poetry*; nor that *Octavia* fell  
into

into a Swoond, at the recital made by *Virgil* of those Verses in the Sixth of his *Æneids*.

This, says *Sir William Temple*, is enough to assert the Powers of Poetry, and discover the Ground of those Opinions of Old, which deriv'd it from *Divine Inspiration*, and gave it so great a share, in the supposed Effects of *Sorcery* or *Magick*. *Temple's Essay of Poetry*, pag. 12, 13.

*Mr. Edmund Waller*, on the *Earl of Roscommon's Translation of Horace's Art of Poetry*.

*Well sounding Verses are the Charm we use,  
Heroick Thoughts, and Vertue to infuse;  
Things of deep Sense we may in Prose unfold,  
But they move more, in lofty Numbers told;  
By the loud Trumpet, which our Courage aids;  
We learn that Sound, as well as Sense perswades.*

The *Lord Roscommon*, in his *Essay on Translated Verse*:

*By secret Influence of Indulgent Skies,  
Empire, and Poesie together rise.  
True Poets are the Guardians of a State,  
And when They fail, portend approaching Fate.  
For that which Rome to Conquest did inspire,  
Was not the Vestal, but the Muses Fire;  
Heaven joyns the Blessings, no Declining Age  
E're felt the Raptures of Poetick Rage.*

*Sir Samuel*

Sir Samuel Take, in his Prologue to the *Five Hours Adventure* :

*Our Ancient Bards their Morals did dispence  
In Numbers, to insinuate the Sense ;  
Knowing that Harmony affects the Soul,  
And who our Passions charm, our Wills controul.*

Mr. John Oldham, in Imitation of *Horace's Art of Poetry* :

*Hence Poets have been held a Sacred Name,  
And plac'd with First Rates in the Lists of Fame.  
Verse was the Language of the Gods of Old,  
In which their Sacred Oracles were told :  
In Verse were the first Rules of Vertue taught,  
And Doctrine thence, as now from Pulpits sought :  
By Verse some have the Love of Princes gain'd  
Who oft vouchsafe so to be entertain'd,  
And with a Muse their weighty cares unbend. }  
Then think it no disparagement, dear Sir, }  
To own your self a Member of that Quire, }  
Whom Kings esteem, and Heaven does inspire. }*

Poetry Encourag'd in former Ages : but  
discourag'd in this.

**T**he wise Ben-Sirach, among other Characters of his Heroes, puts in this among the Rest, That they were such as found out Musical Tunes, and recited Verses in Writing. *Eccles.* 44. 5.

Sir *William Temple* says, The honour and request the Ancient *Poetry* has liv'd in, may not only be observ'd from the Universal Reception and Use in all Nations from *China* to *Peru*, from *Scythia* to *Arabia*, but from the Esteem of the Best and the Greatest Men, as well as the Vulgar. Among the *Hebrews*, *David* and *Solomon*, the Wisest Kings, *Job* and *Jeremiah*, the Holiest Men, were the Best Poets of their Nation and Language. Among the *Greeks*, the Two most Renowned Sages and Law-givers were *Lycurgus* and *Solon*, whereof the *Last* is known to have Excell'd in *Poetry*, and the *First* was so great a Lover of it, that to his Care and Industry we are said (by some Authors) to owe the Collection and Preservation of the loose and scatter'd Pieces of *Homer*, in the order wherein they have since appear'd. *Alexander* is reported neither to have Travel'd nor Slept, without those admirable *Poems* always in his Company. *Phalaris*, that was Inexorable to all other Enemies, relented at the Charms of *Stesichorus's* Muse. Among the *Romans*, the First and great *Scipio*, pass'd the lost hours of his Life in the Conversation of *Terence*, and was thought to have a part in the Composition of his Comedies. *Cæsar* was an Excellent *Poet* as well as *Orator*, and compos'd a *Poem* in his Voyage from *Rome* to *Spain*; relieving the Tedious Difficulties of his March, with the Entertainments of his *Muse*. *Augustus* was not only a Patron, but a Friend and Companion of *Virgil* and *Horace*; and was himself, both an Admirer of *Poetry*, and a Pretender too, as far as his Genius would reach, or his busie Scene allow. 'Tis true, says Sir *William Temple*, since his Age, we have few such Examples of great Princes favouring or affecting *Poetry*, and as few perhaps of great *Poets* deserving it. Whether it be,  
that

## Remarks upon Poetry.

II

that the fierceness of the *Gothick* Humours, or Noise of their perpetual Wars frightened it away; or that the unequal mixture of the Modern Languages could not bear it. Certain it is, that the great Heights and Excellency, both of *Poetry* and *Musick*, fell with the *Roman* Learning, and Empire, and have never since recover'd the Admiration and Applauses that before attended them. **Temple's** *Essay of Poetry*, pag. 60, 61.

Mr. *Charles Cleeve* tells us, that it stands Recorded of the Famous *Alcæus*, that great *Poet* and *Souldier*, that he used to make his Speeches in *Verse* at the head of his Army; and, that he thought there was as much *Martial Musick* in the Harmonious Cadence of Numbers, as in the louder Noise of *Drums* and *Hautboys*.

He also remarks, That the great *Scipio* had *Ennius* always in his Camp: And a greater than *He*, the *Macedonian* Youth, carried a whole knot of the *Brothers* of the *Quill*, into *Asia* with him; And, in short, that in those Times, there was scarce any Great Man without his *Poeta à Latere*.

But according to *Cleeve*, in this our Age, Mankind has quite different Thoughts; For *Poets* are now reckon'd among that *Class* of *Beings*, that carry along with them no real Use, or Profit; but serve only to fill up the *Vacuties* of the *Creation*, and please purely upon the account of Variety. Nay, some are of opinion, that if *Nature* ever made any thing in vain, 'twas a *Poet*. Well, for once (says *Cleeve*) let *Poets* have the Worshipful Name of *Festers* to Mankind; let us grant for once, That they are but *Rifus Plorantis Mundi*, as was said of the *Rainbow*, the Sport and Caprice of *Nature*; Men work'd off when she was in an excellent merry Vein: Yet hard Fate it is, That while, like *Silk-Worms*, they unravel their

very Bowels for the Pleasure and Luxury of Mankind; they themselves must lye Entomb'd in their own Bottoms. **Charles Cleeve's** *Dedicat. to the Lord Churchill, before his Poems.*

The truth is, says Mr. John Norris, this most Excellent and Divine Art of Poetry, has of late been so cheapned and depretiated, by the *Bungling Performances* of some, who thought themselves *Inspired*, and whose *Readers* too have been more kind to 'em than their *Planets*, that Poetry is grown almost out of *Repute*, and men come strongly prejudiced against any thing of this Kind, as expecting nothing but *Froth* and *Emptiness*; and to be a *Poet*, goes for little more than a *Country Fiddler*. But certainly He had once another *Character*, and that in as *nice* and *wise* an Age as this. If we may believe the great *Horace*, He was one

———Cui mens Divinior, atque os  
Magna locuturum———

He had then his *Temples* surrounded with a *Divine Glory*, spoke like the *Oracle* of the God of *Wisdom*; and could describe no *Hero* greater than *Himself*. Poetry, says Mr. Norris, was once the *Mistress* of all the *Arts* in the *Circle*, that which held the *Reins* of the *World* in her hand, and which gave the *First*, and (if we may judge by the *Effects*) perhaps the *Best Institutes*, for the *Moralizing* and *Governing* the *Passions* of Mankind.

It may (says Norris) appear strange indeed, that in such a *Refining Age* as this, wherein all things seem ready to receive their *last Turn* and *finishing Stroke*, Poetry should be the only thing, that remains unimprov'd. And yet

yet so it happens, that which we generally have now a-days, is no more like the thing it was formerly, than *Modern Religion* is like *Primitive Christianity*. 'Tis with *this* as with our *Musick*. From Grave, Majestick, Solemn Strains, where deep Instructive Sense is sweetly convey'd in *Charming Numbers*, where equal Address is made to the *Judgment* and *Imagination*, and where *Beauty* and *Strength* go hand in hand, 'tis now for the most part dwindl'd down to light, frothy stuff, consisting either of mad Extravagant *Rants*, or slight *Witticisms*, and little *Amorous Conceits*, fit only for a *Tavern Entertainment*, and that too among Readers of a *Dutch Palate*. **Joh. Norrfs's** *Pref. to his Collection of Miscellanies*.

Mr. *Thomas Rymer* observes to us, That at the beginning of the *Reformation*, the Name of *Poet* was a mighty Scare-Crow to the *Mumpsimus* Doctors every where. The *German Divines*, and Professors at *Cologne*, were nettled and uneasie by this *Poet*, and the *other Poet*; *Poet Reuclin*, *Poet Erasmus*. Every body was reckon'd a *Poet* that was more a *Conjurer* than themselves. And belike, the *Jesuits* are still of Opinion, That the *Stage-Plays* have not done 'em Service. *Campanella* tells us, that the *German and Gallican Heresse* began with *Sing-Song*, and is carried on by *Comedies* and *Tragedies*. **Tho. Rymer's** *Short view of Tragedy*, pag. 34.

*Oldham* complaining of the little Encouragement *Poets* meet with in this Age:

Should mighty *Sappho* in these days revive,  
And hope upon her Stock of Wit to live;  
She must to *Creswell's* trudge to mend her Gains,  
And lett her Tail to hire, as well as Brains.  
What *Poet* ever fin'd for Sheriff? or who  
By Wit and Sense did ever Lord Mayors grow.

*My.*

My own hard Usage here I need not press,  
 Where you have every day before your face,  
 Plenty of fresh resembling Instances:  
 Great Cowley's Muse the same ill Treatment had,  
 Whose Verse shall live for ever to upbraid  
 Th' ungrateful World, that left such Worth unpaid.  
 Waller himself may thank Inheritance  
 For what he else had never got by Sense.  
 On Butler who can think without just Rage,  
 The Glory, and the Scandal of the Age?  
 Fair stood his hopes, when first he came to Town,  
 Met every day with Welcomes of Renown,  
 Courted, and lov'd by all, with Wonder read,  
 And Promises of Princely favour fed:  
 But what Reward for all had he at last,  
 After a life in dull Expectance pass'd?  
 The Wretch at Summing up his mis-spent days,  
 Found nothing left, but Poverty and Praise:  
 Of all his Gains by Verse he could not save  
 Enough to purchase Flannel and a Grave:  
 Reduc'd to Want, he in due time falls sick,  
 Was fain to die, and be interr'd on Tick:  
 And well might bless the Feaver that was sent  
 To rid him hence, and his worse Fate prevent.

Dryden making his Complaint upon the same Subject:

We all by fits and starts, like drowning Men,  
 But just peep up, and then dop down again.  
 Let those who call us Wicked, change their Sense,  
 For never Men liv'd more on Providence.  
 Not Lott'ry Cavaliers are half so poor,  
 Nor broken Citts, nor a Vacation Whore.



So wretched, that if Pharaoh could Divine,  
He might have spar'd his Dream of Seven lean Kine,  
And chang'd his Vision for the Muses Nine.

See the *Miscellany Poems*, pag. 293.

The same Author in another place :

*The Fate, which governs Poets, thought it fit,  
He shou'd not raise his Fortunes by his Wit.  
The Clergy thrive, and the litigious Bar ;  
Dull Heroes fatten with the Spoils of War :  
All Southern Vices, Heav'n be prais'd, are here ;  
But Wit's a Luxury you think too dear.  
When you to cultivate the Plant are loth,  
'Tis a shrewd Sign 'twas never of your growth :  
And Wit in Northern Climates will not blow,  
Except, like Orange-trees, 'tis hous'd from Snow.*

**Dryd.** Prologue to *Aureng-Zebe*.

*That good Humour is essentially  
Necessary to a Poet.*

**A** Braham Cowley tells us, There is nothing that requires so much serenity and chearfulness of Spirit, as Poetry. The Mind must not be either overwhelm'd with the Cares of Life ; or overcast with the Clouds of Melancholly and Sorrow ; or shaken and disturb'd with the Storms of Injurious Fortune ; it must, like the Halcyon, have fair Weather to breed in. The Soul must be fill'd with bright and delightful Idea's, when it undertakes to communicate delight to others ; which is  
the

the main end of *Poesie*. One may see through the Stile of *Ovid de Trist.* the humbled and dejected Condition of Spirit with which he wrote it; there scarce remains any footsteps of that Genius,

*Que m nec Jovis ira, nec ignes, &c.*

The Cold of the Country had stricken through all his Faculties, and benumm'd the very Feet of his Verses. He is himself, methinks, like one of the Stories of his own *Metamorphoses*; and though there remain some weak Resemblances of *Ovid at Rome*, it is but as he says of *Niobe*,

*In vultu color est sine sanguine, lumina mæstis  
Stant immota genis; nihil est in Imagine vivum,  
Nec tamen*——

The truth is, for a Man to write well, it is necessary to be in good Humour; neither is Wit less Eclips'd with the unquietness of Mind, than Beauty with the Indisposition of Body. So that 'tis almost as hard a thing to be a Poet in despite of Fortune, as it is in despite of Nature. **Abrah. Cowley**, in his Preface.

Dryden remarks, That *Ovid*, going to his Banishment, and writing from on Shipboard to his Friends, excus'd the Faults of his Poetry by his Misfortunes; and told them, That good Verses never flow, but from a serene and compos'd Spirit. Wit, says Dryden, which is a kind of Mercury, with Wings fasten'd to his Head and Heels, can fly but slowly in a damp Air. **Dryd.** Dedic. before his Panegyrick on the Countess of Abingdon.

Mr. Thomas Flatman, in the Preface to the third Edition of his *Poems*, tells us, That he believes the Reader might easily discover in his several *Poems*, when 'twas *Fair Weather*, when *Changeable*, and when the *Quick-Silver* fell down to *Storm* and *Tempest*.

Sir Richard Fanshaw, in his Translation of *Pastor Fido*:

*But in this Age (inhumane Age the while!)  
The Art of Poetry is made too vile.  
Swans must have pleasant Nests, high feeding, fair  
Weather to sing : and with a load of Care  
Men cannot climb Parnassus Cliff : for he  
Who is still wrangling with his Destiny  
And his Malignant Fortune, becomes hoarse,  
And loses both his Singing and Discourse.*

ACT V. Scene I.

*That a Poet should keep his Fancy,  
and Wit within due Bounds.*

**R**apin observes, That nothing can more contribute to the perfection of *Poetry*, than a *Judgment* proportion'd to the *Wit* ; for the greater that the *Wit* is, and the more *Strength* and *Vigour* that the *Imagination* has to form those *Idea's* that enrich *Poesie* ; the more *Wisdom* and *Discretion* is requisite to moderate that heat, and govern its natural *Fury*. For *Reason* ought to be much stronger than the *Fancy*, to discern how far the *Transports* may be carried. 'Tis a great Talent to forbear speaking all one thinks, and to leave some-

D

thing

thing for others to employ their Thoughts upon. 'Tis not ordinarily known how far Matters should be carried; a Man of an *accomplish'd Genius* stops regularly where he ought to stop, and retrenches boldly what ought to be omitted. 'Tis a great fault not to *leave a thing when 'tis well*; for which *Apelles* so much blam'd *Protagenes*. This Moderation (says *Rapin*) is the Character of a great *Wit*, the *Vulgar* understand it not; and (whatever is alledg'd to the contrary) never any, save *Homer* and *Virgil*, had the discretion to *leave a thing when 'twas well*. **Rap.** *Reflex. on Aristot. of Poësie, 1. Part, Sect. xvi.*

*Rimer* tells us, That *Fancy* in Poetry, is like *Faith* in Religion; it makes far Discoveries, and soars above Reason, but never clashes, or runs against it. *Fancy* leaps, and frisks, and away she's gone; whilst Reason rattles the Chain, and follows after. Reason must consent and ratifie whatever by *Fancy* is attempted in its absence; or else 'tis all *null* and void in Law. However, in the Contrivance and Oeconomy of a Play, Reason is always principally to be consulted. Those (says *Rimer*) who object against Reason, are the *Fanaticks* in Poetry, and are never to be sav'd by their *Good Works*. **Rimer** of the Tragedies of the last Age, pag. 8.

No Man (says *Dryden*, in his Preface to *Troilus and Cressida*) should pretend to write, who cannot temper his *Fancy* with his Judgment: Nothing is more dangerous to a raw Horseman, than a hot-mouth'd *Fade* without a Curb.

'Tis not enough to have a share of Wit,  
There must be Judgment too to manage it;

For

*For Fancy's like a rough, but ready Horse,  
Whose Mouth is govern'd more by Skill than Force.*

**Ch. Cotton** before Flatman's Poems.

The Earl of *Mulgrave*, in that Incomparable Poem,  
his *Essay on Poetry*, tells us :

*As all is Dullness, when the Fancy's bad,  
So, without Judgment, Fancy is but mad;  
And Judgment has a boundless Influence,  
Not only in the Choice of Words or Sence,  
But on the World, on Manners, and on Men;  
Fancy is but the Feather of the Pen;  
Reason is that substantial useful Part,  
Which gains the Head, while t'other wins the Heart.*

*Rapin* remarks, That there is not a greater hindrance to the *Epick* or *Heroick* Poem, than to have a *Wit* too vast; for such will make nothing exact in these kind of Works, whose chief Perfection is the *Justness*. These *Wits* that strike at all, are apt to pass the Bounds: the *Swinge* of their *Genius* carries them to Irregularity; nothing they do is exact, because their *Wit* is not: All that they say, and all that they imagine, is always vast; they neither have proportion in the *Design*, nor justness in the *Thought*, nor exactness in the *Expression*. This fault is common to most of the *Modern Poets*, especially to the *Spaniards*. **Rap.** *Reflex. on Aristot. of Poetic, Part 2. Sect. 3.*

*Another Fault which often does befall,  
Is when the Wit of some great Poet shall  
So Overflow, that is, be none at all;*

}

## Remarks upon Poetry.

*That all his Fools speak Sense, as if possess'd,  
 And each by Inspiration breaks his Jest;  
 If once the Justness of each Part be lost,  
 Well we may laugh, but at the Poet's cost.  
 That silly Thing, Men call Sheer-wit, avoid,  
 With which our Age so nauseously is cloy'd;  
 Humour is all, Wit should be only brought  
 To turn agreeably some proper Thought.*

**Bulgr.** Essay on Poetry.

*Wit is not to adorn, and guild each part;  
 That shews more Cost than Art.  
 Jewels at Nose and Lips but ill appear;  
 Rather than all Things Wit, let none be there.  
 Several Lights will not be seen,  
 If there be nothing else between.  
 Men doubt, because they stand so thick i'th' Skie,  
 If those be Stars, which paint the Galaxie.*

**Abz. Cowley** of Wit.

Dryden says, Though no Man will ever decry Wit, but he who despairs of it himself; and who has no other quarrel to it, but that which the Fox had to the Grapes; yet, as Mr. Cowley (who had a greater Portion of it than any Man I know) tells us in his Character of Wit, Rather than all Wit let there be none; I think, says Dryden, there's no folly so great in any Poet of our Age, as the Superfluity and Waste of Wit was in some of our Predecessors: particularly we may say of Fletcher and of Shakespear, what was said of Ovid, *In omni ejus ingenio, facilius quod rejici, quàm quod adjici potest, invenies.* The contrary of which was true in Virgil, and our Incomparable Johnson. **Dryd.** Pref. to the Mock-Astrologer.

*That*

*That a Poet may write upon the Subject of Love ; but he must avoid Obscenity.*

SO it is, says *Abraham Cowley*, that *Poets* are scarce thought *Free-men* of their *Company*, without paying some *Duties*, and Obliging themselves to be true to *Love*. Sooner or later they must all pass through that *Tryal*, like some *Mahumetan Monks*, that are bound by their *Order*, once at least in their *Life*, to make a *Pilgrimage* to *Mecca*.

*In furias ignemq; ruunt ; Amor omnibus idem.*

But we must not always make a judgment of their *Manners* from their *Writings* of this kind ; as the *Romanists* uncharitably do of *Beza*, for a few lascivious *Sonnets* compos'd by him in his *Youth*. It is not in this Sense that *Poesie* is said to be a kind of *Painting* ; it is not the *Picture* of the *Poet*, but of *Things* and *Persons* imagin'd by him. He may be in his own practice and disposition a *Philosopher*, nay a *Stoick*, and yet speak sometimes with the Softness of an *Amorous Sappho*.  
*Abz. Cowley* in his *Preface*.

*Yet do I not their Sullen Muse approve,  
Who from all modest Writings banish Love.*

*Boileau's Art of Poetry, pag. 59.*

But though *Love* be a Subject allow'd to *Poets*, yet any thing that's in the least *Obscene*, must wholly be.

## 22      *Remarks upon Poetry.*

be avoided. The *Muses of true Poets*, says *Rapin*, are as chaste as *Vestals*.

Here, as in all things else, is most unfit  
Bare Ribaldry, that poor Pretence to Wit.

**Bulgrave's** Essay on Poetry.

Immodest Words admit of no defence;  
For Want of Decency, is want of Sense.

**Roscomon** on Translated Verse, pag. 8.

Much less can that have any place,  
At which a Virgin hides her face :  
Such Dross, the Fire must purge away ; 'tis just  
The Author blush there, where the Reader must.

**Abz. Cowley's** Ode of Wit.

*Obscene Discourse*, says a *Modern Author*, is now grown a thing so common, that one would think we were fallen into an Age of *Metamorphosis*, and that the *Brutes* did (not only *Poetically*, and in fiction) but *really* speak. For the Talk of Many is so *Bestial*, that it seems to be but the Conceptions of the more libidinous Animals cloath'd in Humane Language. And yet even *this* must pass for Ingenuity, and be counted among the highest Strains of *Wit*. A wretched Debasement of that *Sprightful Faculty*, thus to be made the *Interpreter* to a Goat or Boar : for doubtless had those Creatures but the *Organs of Speech*, their Fancies lie enough that way to make them as good Company, as those who more studiously apply themselves to this sort of Entertainment. The **Author** of the **whole Duty of Man**, in his Government of the Tongue, pag. 204, 205.

*That*



*That the most difficult part of a Poet, is, to describe the Manners, and the Passions.*

**R**apin tells us, That as the *Painter* draws Faces by their Features; so the *Poet* represents the *Minds* of Men by their *Manners*: and the most general Rule for Painting the *Manners*, is to exhibit every Person in his proper *Character*. A *Slave*, with base Thoughts, and servile Inclinations. A *Prince*, with a liberal Heart, and *Air* of Majesty. A *Souldier*, fierce, insolent, surly, and inconstant. An *Old Man*, covetous, wary, jealous. 'Tis in describing the *Manners*, that *Terence* triumph'd over all the *Poets* of his time, in *Varro's* Opinion, for his Persons are never found out of their *Characters*. He observes their *Manners* in all the Niceties and Rigours of *Decorum*, which *Homer* himself has not always done, as some pretend. *Longinus* cannot endure the *Wounds*, the *Adulteries*, the *Hatred*, and all the other Weaknesses to which he makes the *Gods* obnoxious, contrary to their *Character*.

The Sovereign Rule for treating of *Manners*, says *Rapin*, is to Copy them after *Nature*, and above all to study well the *Heart* of Man, to know how to distinguish all its *Motions*. 'Tis this which none are acquainted with: the *Heart* of Man is an *Abyss*, where none can sound the Bottom: it is a *Mystery*, which the most Quick-sighted cannot pierce into, and in which the most cunning are mistaken; at the worst the *Poet* is oblig'd to speak of *Manners* according to the common Opinion. *Ajax* must be represented *grum*, as *Sophocles*;

*phocles*; *Polyxena* and *Iphigenia*, generous, as *Euripides* has represented them. To conclude, the *Manners* must be proportionable to the *Age*, to the *Sex*, to the *Quality*, to the *Employment*, and to the *Fortune* of the *Persons*. And, in a word, as nothing tolerable can be perform'd in *Poetry* without *this knowledge*, so with it all becomes *admirable*. **Rap.** *Reflex. on Aristotle of Poesie, 1. Part, Sect. xxv.*

The *Passions*, says *Rapin*, give no less *Grace* to *Poetry*, than the *Manners*; when the *Poet* has found the *Art* to make them move by their *natural Springs*. *Quintilian* tells us, without the *Passions* all is cold and flat in the *Discourse*: for they (says *Rapin*) are, as it were, the *Soul* and *Life* of it; but the *Secret* is, to express them according to the several *Estates*, and different degrees from their *Birth*: and in this distinction consists all the *Delicacy*, wherewith the *Passions* are to be handled, to give them that *Character*, which renders them *admirable*, by the secret *Motions* they impress on the *Soul*. *Hecuba* in *Euripides* falls into a *Swoon* on the *Stage*, the better to express all the *Weight* of her *Sorrow*, that could not be represented by *Words*. But *Achilles* appears with too much *Calmness* and *Tranquility* at the *Sacrifice* of *Iphigenia*, design'd for him in *Marriage* by *Agamemnon*: his *Grief* has *Expressions* too little suiting to the natural *Impetuosity* of his *Heart*. *Clytemnestra* much better preserves her *Character*; she discovers all the *Passion* of a *Mother* in the loss of a *Daughter*, so lovely as was this *Unfortunate Princess*, whom they were about to *Sacrifice*, to appease the *Gods*: and *Agamemnon* generously lays aside the tenderness of a *Father*, to take, as he ought, the *Sentiments* of a *King*; He neglected his own *Interest*, to provide for the *Publick*. To conclude, 'tis this exact *Distinction* of the  
different

different Degrees of *Passion*, that is of most effect in *Poetry*: for this gives the Draught of *Nature*, and is the most infallible *Spring* for moving the *Soul*; but, says *Rapin*, it is good to observe, that the most ardent and lively *Passions* become *cold* and *dead*, if they be not well manag'd, or be not in their place. The *Poet* must judge when there must be a *Calm*, and when there must be *Trouble*; for nothing is more ridiculous, than *Passion* out of Season. But it is not enough to move a *Passion* by a *notable Incident*, there must be Art to conduct it, so far as it should go; for by a *Passion* that is imperfect and *abortive*, the *Soul* of the *Spectator* may be *shaken*; but this is not enough, it must be *ravish'd*. *Rap. ibid. Sect. xxxvi.*

*Dryden* remarks, That to describe the *Passions* naturally, and to move them artfully, is one of the greatest Commendations that can be given to a *Poet*; To write *pathetically*, says *Longinus*, cannot proceed but from a *lofty Genius*. A *Poet*, says *Dryden*, must be born with this *Quality*; yet, unless he help himself by an acquir'd Knowledge of the *Passions*, what they are in their own nature, and by what Springs they are to be mov'd, he will be subject either to raise them where they ought not to be rais'd, or not to raise them by the just Degree of *Nature*, or to amplify them beyond the Natural Bounds, or not to observe the *Crisis*, and *Turns* of them, in their cooling and decay: All which Errors, says *Dryden*, proceed from want of Judgment in the *Poet*, and from being unskill'd in the Principles of *Moral Philosophy*. Nothing is more frequent in a Fanciful Writer, than to foil himself by not managing his Strength: therefore, as in a *Wrestler*, there is first requir'd some measure of force, a well-knit Body, and active Limbs, without which all Instruction would be vain; yet, these

being granted, if he want the *Skill* which is necessary to a *Wrestler*, he shall make but small advantage of his natural Robustiousness: So in a *Poet*, his inborn Vehemence and force of Spirit, will only run him out of breath the sooner, if it be not supported by the help of *Art*. The roar of *Passion* indeed may please an *Audience*, three parts of which are ignorant enough, to think all is moving which is *Noise*, and it may stretch the Lungs of an Ambitious *Actor*, who will die upon the Spot for a thund'ring Clap; but it will move no other *Passion* than *Indignation*, and contempt, from Judicious Men. He who would raise the *Passion* of a Judicious *Audience*, says a learned *Critick*, must be sure to take his *Hearers* along with him; if *they* be in a *Calm*, 'tis in vain for him to be in a *Huff*: he must move them by degrees, and kindle with 'em; otherwise he will be in danger of setting his own heap of *Stubble* on fire, and of burning out by himself, without warming the Company that stand about him.

*Wyd. Pref. to Troilus and Cressida.*

*Would you your Works for ever should remain,  
And, after Ages past, be sought again?  
In all you write, observe with Care and Art  
To move the Passions, and incline the Heart.  
If, in a Labour'd Act, the pleasing Rage  
Cannot our Hopes and Fears by turns ingage,  
Nor in our Mind a feeling Pity raise;  
In vain with Learned Scenes you fill your Plays:  
Your cold Discourse can never move the Mind  
Of a Stern Critick, naturally unkind;  
Who, justly tir'd with your Pedantick flight,  
Or falls asleep, or censures all you write.*

*The Secret is, Attention first to gain ;  
To move our Minds, and then to entertain :  
That, from the very op'ning of the Scenes,  
The first may shew us what the Author means.  
I'm tir'd to see an Actor on the Stage,  
That knows not whether he's to Laugh, or Rage ;  
Who, an Intrigue unravelling in vain,  
Instead of Pleasing, keeps my Mind in pain :  
I'de rather much the nauseous Dunce should say  
Downright, my Name is Hector in the Play ;  
Than with a Mass of Miracles, ill join'd,  
Confound my Ears, and not instruct my Mind.*

**Boileau's** Art of Poetry, pag. 30, 31.

*Would'st have me weep? thy self must first begin:  
Then, Telephus, to pity I incline,  
And think thy Case, and all thy Suff'rings mine ;  
But if thou'rt made to act thy part amiss,  
I can't forbear to sleep, or laugh, or hiss ;  
Let Words express the Looks which Speakers wear ;  
Sad, fit a Mournful, and dejected Air ;  
The Passionate must buff, and storm, and rave ;  
The Gay be pleasant, and the Serious grave.  
For Nature works, and moulds our Frame within,  
To take all manner of Impressions in.  
Now makes us hot, and ready to take fire,  
Now Hope, now Joy, now Sorrow does inspire ;  
And all these Passions in our face appear ;  
Of which the Tongue is sole Interpreter :  
But he whose Words and Fortunes do not suit,  
By Pit and Gall'ry both, is hooted out.*

**Oldham** in Imitation of Horace's Art of Poetry, pag. 10.

That a Poet must take great care of his  
Language and Expression.

**T**He *Expression* or *Language*, says *Rapin*, must have five *Qualities*, to have all the Perfection that *Poetry* demands: It must be *apt*, *clear*, *natural*, *splendid*, and *numerous*.

The *Language* must in the *first place* be *apt*, and have nothing that is impure or barbarous: for though one may speak what is *great*, *noble*, and *admirable*; all is despicable and odious, if the *Purity* be wanting: the greatest *Thoughts* in the *World* have not any *Grace*, if the *Construction* be defective. This *Purity* of Writing is of late so strongly Establish'd among the *French*, that he must be very *hardy*, says *Rapin*, that will make *Verse* in an Age so delicate and curious, unless he understand the *Tongue* perfectly.

Secondly, the *Language* must be *clear*, That it may be Intelligible; for one of the greatest faults in Discourse, is *Obscurity*: in this *Camoens*, whom the *Portuguese* call their *Virgil*, is extreamly blameable; for his *Verse* are so *obscure*, that they may pass for *Mysteries*: and the *Thoughts* of *Dante* are so *profound*, that much *Art* is requir'd to dive into them. *Poetry* demands a more *clear Air*, and what is less incomprehensible.

The *third Quality*, is, That it be *natural*, without affectation, according to the *Rules of Decorum*, and *good Sense*. *Studied Phrases*, a too *florid Stile*, *fine Words*, *Terms strain'd* and *remote*, and all extraordinary Expressions, are insupportable to the *true Poesie*; only *Simplicity* pleases, provided it be sustain'd with *Greatness* and *Majesty*: but this *Simplicity*, says *Rapin*, is not known,  
except

except by *Great Souls*, the *little Wits* understand nothing of it; 'tis the *Master-piece* of *Poesie*, and the *Character* of *Homer* and *Virgil*. The *Ignorant* hunt after *Wit*, and *fine Thoughts*, because they are ignorant.

*Fourthly*, The *Language* must be *lofty* and *splendid*; for the *common* and *ordinary Terms* are not proper for a *Poet*; he must use *Words* that partake nothing of the *Base* and *Vulgar*, they must be *Noble* and *Magnificent*; the *Expressions strong*, the *Colours lively*, the *Draughts bold*: his *Discourse* must be such as may equal the greatness of the *Idea's* of a *Workman*, who is the *Creator* of his *Work*.

In the *last place*, The *Language* must be *Numerous*, to uphold that *Greatness* and *Air of Majesty*, which reigns throughout in *Poesie*; and to express all the force and dignity of the great things it speaks: *Terms* that go off roundly from the *Mouth*, and that fill the *Ears*, are sufficient to render all *Admirable*, as *Poesie* requires. But, says *Rapin*, this is not enough, that the *Expressions* be *Stately* and *Great*, there must likewise be *Heat* and *Vehemence*: and above all, there must *shine* throughout the *Discourse* a certain *Grace* and *Delicacy*, which makes the principal *Ornament*, and most *Universal Beauty*.  
*Rap. Reflex. on Arist. of Poesie, I. Part, Sect. xxvii.*

*Observe the Language well in all you write,  
 And swerve not from it in your loftiest flight.  
 The smoothest Verse, and the exactest Sense  
 Displease us, if ill English give offence:*

*A bar'rous Phrase no Reader can approve;  
 Nor Bombast, Noise, or Affectation love.*

*In short, without pure Language, what you write,  
 Can never yield us Profit, or Delight.*

*Boileau's Art of Poetry, English'd by Sir Will. Soame,*

*Rapin*

*Rapin* does further remark, That there is a particular *Rhetorick* for Poetry, which the *Modern Poets* scarce understand at all; this Art consists in discerning very precisely what ought to be said *Figuratively*, and what to be spoken *simply*; and in knowing well, where Ornament is requir'd, and where not. *Tasso* understood not well this Secret, he is too *trim* and too *polite*, in places, where the *Gravity* of the Subject demanded a more simple and serious *Stile*: As for Example, where *Tancred* comes near the Tomb of *Clorinda*, he makes the Unfortunate Lover, who came from slaying his *Mistress*, speak *poetically*, instead of expressing his Sorrow *naturally*; he commits this fault in many other places. *Guarini* in his *Pastor Fido*, and *Bonarelli* in his *Phyllis*, are often guilty of this Vice; they always think rather to speak things *wittily*, than *naturally*: this is the most ordinary *Rock* to mean *Wits*, who suffer their Fancy to flie out after the pleasing Images they find in their way: they rush into the Descriptions of *Groves*, *Rivers*, *Fountains*, and *Temples*, which *Horace* calls *Childish*, in his Book of *Poesie*. 'Tis only the Talent of Great Men to know to *speak*, and to be *silent*; to be *florid*, and to be *plain*; to be *lofty*, and to be *low*; to use *Figures*, and to speak *simply*; to mingle *Fiction* and Ornament, as the Subject requires; *finally*, to manage all well in his Subject, without pretending to give *delight*, where he should only *instruct*; and without *rising* in great *Thoughts*, where natural and common *Sentiments* are required; to conclude, a *simple Thought* in its proper place, is more worth than all the most *exquisite Words*, and *Wit* out of *Season*. *Rap. Ibid. Sect. xxxiv.*



Figures of Speech, which Poets think so fine,  
 Art's needless Varnish to make Nature shine,  
 Are all but Paint upon a Beauteous face,  
 And in Descriptions only claim a Place.  
 But to make Rage declaim, and Grief discourse,  
 From Lovers in despair fine things to force,  
 Must needs succeed, for who can chuse but pity  
 A dying Hero miserably Witty?  
 But, oh, the Dialogues, where Jest and Mock  
 Is held up like a Rest at Shittle-cock!  
 Or else like Bells, eternally they chime,  
 They sigh in Simile, and die in Rhime.

*Bulgr. Essay on Poetry.*

'Tis Mr. Dryden's Observation, That, as in a Room, contriv'd for State, the height of the Roof shou'd bear a proportion to the Area; so, in the Heightenings of Poetry, the Strength and Vehemence of Figures shou'd be suited to the Occasion, the Subject, and the Persons. All beyond this (says Dryden) is monstrous; 'tis out of Nature; 'tis an Excrecence, and not a living part of Poetry. *Dryd. in a Dedic. to the Lord Haughton, before the Spanish Fryar.*

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### Concerning the Poetick Licence.

**T**HE Poetick Licence, says Dryden, in his *Apology for Heroick Poetry*, is that Birthright, which is deriv'd to Poets, from their great Fore-fathers, even from Homer down to Ben. And they who would deny it them,

them, have, in plain terms, the *Fox's Quarrel* to the *Grapes*, they cannot reach it. I will, says *Dryden*, presume to say, That the Boldest Strokes of *Poetry*, when they are manag'd Artfully, are those which most delight the Reader.

Poets, like Lovers, should be bold and dare,  
They spoil their Business with an Over-care:  
And he who servilely creeps after Sence,  
Is safe, but ne're will reach an Excellence.

*Dryd.* Prologue to *Tyran. Love.*

If no Latitude, says *Dryden*, is to be allow'd a *Poet*, you take from him not only his *Licence* of *Quidlibet audendi*, but you tie him up in a straiter compass than you would a *Philosopher*. This is indeed *Musas colere severiores*: You would have him follow *Nature*, but he must follow her on foot: You have dismounted him from his *Pegasus*. *Dryden's Essay of Dram. Poësie*, pag. 48.

The truth is, says *Sir William Temple*, there is something in the Genius of *Poetry*, too Libertine to be confin'd to many Rules; and whoever goes about to subject it to such Constraints, loses both its *Spirit* and *Grace*, which are ever Native, and never learnt, even of the best Masters. 'Tis as if, to make *Excellent Honey*, you should cut off the Wings of your *Bees*, confine them to their Hive, or their Stands, and lay Flowers before them, such as you think the sweetest, and like to yield the finest Extraction; you had as good pull out their Stings, and make arrant *Drones* of them. They must range through *Fields*, as well as *Gardens*, chuse such Flowers as they please, and by Proprieties and Scents they only know and distinguish: They must Work  
up

up their Cells with admirable Art, extract their Honey with infinite Labour, and sever it from the Wax, with such Distinction and Choice, as belongs to none but themselves to perform, or to judge. *Temple's Essay of Poetry*, pag. 20, 21.

Mr. *Richard Wooley* tells us, that *Lucan*, whose best Character consists, in having made some very happy *Bold Strokes*, would have been spoil'd, had he been checkt every time he offer'd at too lofty *Flights*. But now we find he has been *successfully Bold*, whereas more *regularity* would have render'd him too flat and cold: But now *feliciter audet*, is his just *Encomium*. It is therefore (says *Wooley*) with *Poets*, as 'tis with those young *Heroes*, whom an *undiscreet Valour* more becomes, than an *over-circumspect* and *cautious Prudence*. And therefore *Sir William Temple* remarks, That *Rules* at best are capable only to prevent the making of *bad Verses*, but never able to make men *good Poets*. *Rich. Wooley's Compleat Library*, Novemb. 1692.

*The Priviledge that Ancient Poets claim  
Now turn'd to Licence by too just a Name,* }  
*Belongs to None but an Establish'd Fame,* }  
*Which scorns to take it———*

*Absurd Expressions, Crude, Abortive Thoughts,  
All the lewd Legion of Exploded Faults,  
Base Fugitives to that Asylum fly,  
And Sacred Laws with Insolence despise.*

*Not thus our Heroes of the Former Days,  
Deserv'd and Gain'd their never fading Bays;  
For I mistake, or far the greatest Part,  
Of what some call Neglect, was Study'd Art.  
When Virgil seems to Trifle in a Line,  
'Tis like a Warning-Piece, which gives the Sign*

To wake your Fancy, and prepare your Sight,  
 To reach the noble Height of some unusual Flight.  
**Roscommon** on Translated Verse, pag. 21.

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*Whether Art or Nature contributes  
 most to Poetry.*

**R**Apin tells us, This is one of those Questions unresolv'd, which might be proper for a *Declamation*, and the Decision is of small Importance: it suffices, that we know both the *one* and the *other* are of that moment, that none can attain to any Sovereign Perfection in *Poetry*, if he be defective in *either*: So that both (saith *Horace*) must mutually assist each other, and conspire to make a *Poet* accomplish'd. But though *Nature* be of little value, without the help of *Art*, yet we may approve of *Quintilian's* Opinion, who believ'd, that *Art* did less contribute to that Perfection, than *Nature*. And by the Comparison that *Longinus* makes betwixt *Apollonius* and *Homer*, *Erastosthenes* and *Archilochus*, *Bacchilides* and *Pindar*, *Ion* and *Sophocles*, the former of all which never transgressed against the Rules of *Art*, whereas *these other* did; it appears, that the advantage of *Wit* is always preferr'd before that of *Art*. **Rap.**  
*Reflex. on Aristot. of Poësie, Part I. Sect. xiii.*

Concerning Poets there has been Contest,  
 Whether they're made by Art or Nature best:  
 But if I may presume in this Affair,  
 Amongst the Rest my Judgment to declare,

*No Art without a Genius will avail,  
And Parts without the help of Art will fail;  
But both Ingredients joyntly must unite  
To make the happy Character compleat.*

**Oldham**, in Imitation of *Horace's Art of Poetry*,  
pag. 35.

One may be an *Orator*, says *Rapin*, without the natural Gift of *Eloquence*, because *Art* may supply that defect ; but no Man can be a *Poet* without a *Genius* : the want of which, no *Art* or *Industry* is capable to repair. This *Genius* is that *Celestial Fire* intended by the *Fable*, which enlarges and heightens the *Soul*, and makes it express things with a lofty Air. Happy is he (says *Rapin*) to whom *Nature* has made this Present, by this he is raised above himself ; whereas others are always low and creeping, and never speak but what is mean and common. He that hath a *Genius*, appears a *Poet* on the smallest and most minute Subjects, by the turn he gives them, and the noble manner in which he expresses himself. **Rap.** *Reflex. on Aristotle of Poetie*, Part 1. Sect. vi.

*Rash Author, 'tis a vain presumptuous Crime,  
To undertake the Sacred Art of Rhime;  
If at thy Birth the Stars that rul'd thy Sence  
Shone not with a Poetick Influence:  
In thy strait Genius thou wilt still be bound,  
Find Phœbus deaf, and Pegasus unsound.*

**Boileau's** *Art of Poetry*, pag. 1.

*Number, and Rhime, and that Harmonious Sound,  
Which never does the Ear with Harshness wound,*

*Are necessary, yet but vulgar Arts,  
 For all in vain these superficial parts  
 Contribute to the Structure of the Whole  
 Without a Genius too, for that's the Soul;  
 A Spirit which inspires the Work throughout,  
 As that of Nature moves the World about;  
 A Heat which glows in every Word that's writ,  
 'Tis something of Divine, and more than Wit;  
 It self unseen, yet all things by it shown,  
 Describing All Men, but describ'd by none.  
 Where dost thou dwell? what Caverns of the Brain  
 Can such a vast, and mighty thing, contain?*

**Dulgr.** Essay on Poetry.

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### *That a Poet should not be addicted to Flattery.*

**P**lutarch tells us, That *Philoxenus*, for despising some dull Poetry of *Dionysius*, was by him condemn'd to dig in the Quarries: from whence being by the Mediation of Friends remanded, at his return *Dionysius* produced some other of his *Verses*, which as soon as *Philoxenus* had read, he made no reply, but calling to the Waiters, said, *Let them carry me again to the Quarries.* Now, if a *Heathen Poet* could prefer a *Corporeal Slavery* before a *Mental*, what name of Reproach is great enough for them, who can submit to both, in pursuit of those poor sordid Advantages they project by their *Flatteries*?

*Rapin* says, Nothing has contributed more to the disreputation of Poetry, than those vile and unmanly *Flatteries*,

teries, whereby the greatest part of Poets have debas'd themselves.

*But Want at last base Flatt'ry entertain'd,  
And old Parnassus with this Vice was stain'd :  
Desire of Gain dazzling the Poets Eyes,  
Their Works were fill'd with fulsome Flatteries.  
Thus needy Wits a vile Revenue made,  
And Verse became a Mercenary Trade.  
Debase not with so mean a Vice thy Art ;  
If Gold must be the Idol of thy Heart,  
Fly, fly th' unfruitful Heliconian Strand,  
Those Streams are not enrich'd with Golden Sand :  
Great Wits, as well as Warriours, only gain  
Laurels and Honours for their Toil and Pain :  
But what ? an Author cannot live on Fame,  
Or pay a Reck'ning with a lofty Name :  
A Poet to whom Fortune is unkind,  
Who when he goes to Bed has hardly din'd ;  
Takes little Pleasure in Parnassus Dreams,  
Or relishes the Heliconian Streams.  
Horace had Ease and Plenty when he writ,  
And free from Cares, for Money or for Meat, }  
Did not expect his Dinner from his Wit. }  
'Tis true ; but Verse is cherish'd by the Great,  
And now none famish who deserve to eat :  
What can we fear, when Virtue, Arts, and Sense,  
Receive the Stars propitious Influence ?*

**Boileau's** Art of Poetry, pag. 63, 64.

*I pity, from my Soul, Unhappy Men,  
Compell'd by Want to prostitute their Pen ;*

*Who*

*Who must, like Lawyers, either Starve or Plead,  
And follow, right or wrong, where Guinnys lead.*

*Roscomon's Essay on Translated Verse,*  
pag. 18.

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## Concerning the Eglogue, Bucolick, or Pastoral.

**J**ulius Scaliger tells us, That the *Pastoral* was the most Ancient kind of *Poetry*, and resulting from the most Ancient way of living: *Singing* (says Scaliger) *first began amongst Shepherds as they fed their Flocks, either by the Impulse of Nature, or in Imitation of the Notes of Birds, or the whispering of Trees.* **Jul. Scallig.** *De Re Poëticâ, lib. 1. cap. 4.*

Since the *first Men* were either *Shepherds* or *Ploughmen*, and *Shepherds*, as may be gather'd out of *Thucydides* and *Varro*, were before the *others*, they were the *first* that, either invited by their leisure, or (which *Lucretius* thinks more probable) in imitation of *Birds*, began a *Tune*.

*Through all the Woods they heard the charming Noise  
Of chirping Birds, and try'd to frame their Voice,  
And imitate. Thus Birds instructed Man,  
And taught them Songs, before their Art began.*

*Lucretius* also, in the same place, informs us, That *Shepherds* were first taught, by the rushing of soft *Breezes* amongst the *Canes*, to blow their *Reeds*, and so by degrees to put their *Songs* in tune.

*And*



*And whilst soft Evening Gales blew o're the Plains,  
And shook the sounding Reeds, they taught the Swains ;  
And thus the Pipe was fram'd, and tuneful Reed ;  
And whilst the tender Flocks securely feed,  
The harmless Shepherds tun'd their Pipes to Love,  
And Amarvillis sounds in every Grove.*

**Creech's** Translat. of *Lucret.* lib. v. pag. 182.

How *Verse* first began, *Tibullus* plainly tells us, in those Verses translated by Mr. Creech :

*First weary at his Plough, the lab'ring Hind  
In certain Feet his rustick Words did bind :  
His dry Reed first he tun'd at Sacred Feasts  
To thank the bounteous Gods, and cheer his Guests.*

From this Birth, as it were, of *Poetry*, *Verse* began to grow up to greater Matters ; for from the Common Discourse of *Plough-men* and *Shepherds*, first *Comedy*, that Mistress of a Private Life, next *Tragedy*, and then *Epick Poetry* arose. This *Maximus Tyrius* confirms in his Twenty first *Dissertation*, where he tells us, That *Plough-Men* just coming from their Work, and scarce cleans'd from the filth of their Employment, did use to flurt out some sudden and *extempore* Catches ; and from this Beginning *Plays* were produc'd, and the *Stage* erected. But to return to the *Eglogue* or *Pastoral*.

The *Eglogue*, says *Rapin*, is the most considerable of the little *Poems* ; it is an Image of the Life of *Shepherds*. Therefore the Matter is low, and nothing Great is in the *Genius* of it ; its business is to describe the *Loves*, the *Sports*, the *Piques*, the *Jealousies*, the *Disputes*, the *Quarrels*, the *Intrigues*, the *Passions*, the *Adventures*,  
and

and all the little *Affairs* of *Shepherds*. So that its Character must be simple, the Wit easie, and the Expression common; it must have nothing that is exquisite, neither in the Thoughts, nor in the Words, nor in any *fashions* of Speech; in which the *Italians*, who have writ in *this kind* of *Verse*, have been mistaken; for they always aim at being witty, and to say things too finely. The true Character of the *Eglogue*, says *Rapin*, is Simplicity and Modesty; its Figures are sweet, the Passions tender, the Motions easie; and though sometimes it may be passionate, and have little Transports, and little Despairs, yet it never rises so high as to be fierce or violent; its *Narrations* are short, *Descriptions* little, the *Thoughts* ingenious, the *Manners* innocent, the *Language* pure, the *Verse* flowing, the *Expressions* plain, and all the *Discourse* natural; for this is not a great *Talker*, that loves to make a noise. The *Models* to be proposed to write well in this sort of *Poesie*, are *Theocritus* and *Virgil*. **Rap.** *Reflex. on Aristotle of Poesie, Part 2. Sect. xxvii.*

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### Concerning Satyr.

**I**T is the Observation of *Dr. Tillotson*, His present *Grace of Canterbury*, that *Satyr* and *Invective* are the easiest kind of *Wit*. Almost any degree of it, says he, will serve to *abuse* and *find fault*. For *Wit* is a keen Instrument, and every one can cut and gash with it; but to carve a beautiful Image, and to polish it, requires great Art and Dexterity. To praise any thing well, is an argument of much more *Wit*, than to abuse.

*buse.* A little Wit, and a great deal of ill Nature, will furnish a Man for *Satyr*; but the greatest Instance of *Wit* is to commend well. And perhaps, says *Tillotson*, the *Best* Things are the *hardest* to be *duly* commended. For though there be a great deal of Matter to work upon, yet there is great Judgment requir'd to make choice. And where the Subject is great and excellent, it is hard not to sink below the dignity of it. *Cil- lotts*. 1. Vol. Sermon. pag. 123.

*Such is the mode of these Censorious days,  
The Art is lost of knowing how to Praise;  
Poets are envious now, and Fools alone  
Admire at Wit, because themselves have none.  
Yet, whatso'e're is by vain Criticks thought,  
Praising is harder much, than finding fault;  
In homely Pieces ev'n the Dutch excell,  
Italians only can draw Beauty well.*

*Earl of Bulgr.* on *Hobbs*, see the *Poëticum Examen*, pag. 99.

*Dr. Barrow* tells us, It is not any Argument of considerable Ability in him that haps to please this way: a slender faculty will serve the turn. The sharpness cometh not from *Wit* so much as from *Choler*, which furnishes the lowest Invention with a kind of pungent Expression, and giveth an Edge to every spightful Word: So that any dull Wretch does seem to scold Eloquenty and Ingeniously. Commonly (says *Barrow*) they who seem to excel this way, are miserably flat in other discourse, and most dully serious: they have a particular unaptness to Describe any *Good* thing, or commend any worthy Person; being destitute of right *Idea's*, and proper terms answerable to such purposes:

their Representations of that kind are absurd and unhandſome; their *Elogies* (to uſe their own way of ſpeaking) are in effect *Satyrs*, and they can hardly more abuſe a Man, than by attempting to commend him; like thoſe in the Prophet, who were *Wiſe to do ill, but to do well had no Knowledge*. *Barrow's* 2d Sermon againſt Evil-ſpeaking, pag. 73, &c.

*Dryden* ſays, There has been a long Diſpute amongſt the *Modern Criticks*, whether the *Romans* deriv'd their *Satyr* from the *Grecians*, or firſt invented it themſelves. *Julius Scaliger*, and *Heinfius*, are of the firſt Opinion; *Casaubon*, *Rigaltius*, *Dacier*, and the Publiſher of the *Dauphin's Juvenal*, maintain the latter. If (ſays *Dryden*) we take *Satyr* in the general Signification of the Word, as it is uſ'd in all Modern Languages, for an *Invective*, 'tis certain that it is almoſt as old as *Verſe*; and though *Hymns*, which are *Praiſes* of God, may be allow'd to have been before it, yet the *Defamation* of others was not long after it. After God had curs'd *Adam* and *Eve* in *Paradiſe*, the Husband and Wife excus'd themſelves, by laying the blame on one another; and gave a beginning to thoſe Conjugal Dialogues in *Proſe*, which the *Poets* have perfected in *Verſe*. The third Chapter in *Job* is one of the firſt Inſtances of this Poem in *Holy Scripture*: unleſs we will take it higher, from the latter end of the *Second*; where his Wife adviſes him to *curſe his Maker*.

This Original, I confeſs, ſays *Dryden*, is not much to the Honour of *Satyr*; but here it was *Nature*, and that *deprav'd*; When it became an *Art*, it bore better Fruit. *Dryd.* in his Dedic. before *Juvenal*, pag. 16.

*Rapin* remarks, That the Principal End of *Satyr*, is to inſtruct the People by diſcrediting *Vice*. It may therefore be of great advantage in a State, when taught to keep within its bounds. But as *Flatterers* embroil them-

themselves with the *Publick*, whilst they strive too much to please *Particulars*; so (says *Rapin*) it happens, that the Writers of *Satyr* disoblige sometimes *Particulars*, whilst they endeavour too much to please the *Publick*: and as downright *Praises* are too gross; so *Satyr* that takes off the Mask, and reprehends *Vice* too openly, is not to be allow'd of: But though it be more difficult to *Praise*, than to *find fault*, because it is easier to discover in People what may be turn'd into *Ridicule*, than to understand their *Merit*; 'tis requisite notwithstanding equally to have a *Wit* for the *one*, as for the *other*. For the same *Delicacies* of *Wit*, that is necessary to him who *praiseth*, to purge his *Praises* from what is *deform'd*, is necessary to him who *findeth fault* to clear the *Satyr* from what is *bitter* in it. And this *Delicacy* which properly gives the relish to *Satyr*, was (says *Rapin*) heretofore the Character of *Horace*, for it was only by the way of *Jest* and *Merriment* that he exercis'd his *Censure*. For he knew full well, that the sporting of *Wit*, hath more effect, than the strongest Reasons, and the most Sententious Discourse, to render *Vice* ridiculous. In which *Juvenal*, with all his Seriousness, has so much ado to succeed. *Rap. Reflex. on Aristotle of Poesie, Part 2. Sect. xxviii.*

Lucilius was the Man who bravely bold,  
To Roman Vices did this Mirror hold,  
Protected humble Goodness from Reproach,  
Show'd Worth on foot, and Rascals in the Coach:  
Horace his pleasing Wit to this did add,  
And none uncensur'd could be Fool or Mad;  
Unhappy was that Wretch, whose Name might be  
Squar'd to the Rules of their sharp Poetry.

Boileau's Art of Poetry, pag. 24.

*When Shakespear, Johnson, Fletcher, rul'd the Stage,  
 They took so bold a Freedom with the Age,  
 That there was scarce a Knave, or Fool, in Town,  
 Of any Note, but had his Picture shown;  
 And (without doubt) though some it may offend,  
 Nothing helps more than Satyr, to amend  
 Ill Manners, or is trulier Virtue's Friend.* }  
*Princes may Laws Ordain, Priests gravely Preach,  
 But Poets, most successfully will teach.  
 For as a Passing-Bell, frights from his Meat,  
 The greedy Sick-man, that too much wou'd eat;  
 So when a Vice, ridiculous is made,  
 Our Neighbour's shame keeps us from growing Bad.*  
*Earl of Rochester in Defence of Satyr.*

*Of all the Ways that Wisest Men could find  
 To mend the Age, and mortifie Mankind,  
 Satyr well writ has most successful prov'd,  
 And Cures, because the Remedy is lov'd.  
 'Tis hard to write on such a Subject more,  
 Without repeating Things said oft before.  
 Some Vulgar Errors only we remove,  
 That stain a Beauty which so much we love.  
 Of well-chose Words some take not care enough,  
 And think they should be as the Subject rough;  
 This great Work must be more exactly made,  
 And sharpest Thoughts in smoothest Words convey'd:  
 Some think, if sharp enough, they cannot fail,  
 As if their only Business was to rail;  
 But Human Frailty nicely to unfold,  
 Distinguishes a Satyr from a Scold.  
 Rage you must hide, and Prejudice lay down,  
 A Satyr's Smile is sharper than his Frown;*

So,

*So, while you seem to slight some Rival Youth  
Malice it self may pass sometimes for Truth.*

*Bulgr. Essay on Poetry.*

The *Author* of the *Preface* to *Valentinian* observes, That *Satyr*, that most needful part of our *Poetry*, has of late been more abus'd, and is grown more degenerate than any other; most commonly, like a *Sword* in the hands of a *Mad-man*, it runs a *Tilt* at all manner of *Persons*, without any sort of distinction or reason; and so ill-guided is this furious *Career*, that the *Thrusts* are most aim'd, where the *Enemy* is best arm'd. *Womens* *Reputations* (of what *Quality* or *Conduct* soever) have been reckon'd as lawful *Game* as *Watchmens* *Heads*; and 'tis thought as glorious a piece of *Gallantry* by some of our *Modern Sparks*, to libel a *Woman* of *Honour*, as to kill a *Constable*, who is doing his duty; *Justice* is not in their *Natures*, and all kind of *Useful Knowledge* lies out of the way of their *Breeding*; *Slander* therefore is their *Wit*, and *Dress* is their *Learning*; *Pleasure* their *Principle*, and *Interest* their *God*.

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### Concerning Tragedy.

**R**imer tells us, That *Authors* generally look no higher than *Thespis* for the *Original* of *Tragedy*; yet *Plato* reckons it much ancients. *Minos*, says he, for all his *Wisdom*, was overseen in making *War* upon *Athens*; where lived so many *Tragick Poets*, that represented him, and fixed on him and his *Family* a *Name* and

and Character never to be wiped off. The *Judges of Hell*, *Pasiphae*, and her *Minotaur*, are upon record to all Posterity.

All agree, says *Rimer*, that in the beginning *Tragedy* was purely a *Religious Worship*, and Solemn Service for their *Holy-days*. Afterwards it came from the *Temples* to the *Theatre*, admitted of a Secular allay, and grew to be some Image of the World, and Humane Life. When it was brought to the utmost perfection by *Sophocles*, the *Chorus* continued a necessary part of the *Tragedy*; but that *Musick* and the *Dancing* which came along with the *Chorus*, were meer *Religion*, were no part of the *Tragedy*, nor had any thing of *Philosophy* or *Instruction* in them.

The *Government* had the same care of these *Representations*, as of their *Religion*, and as much caution about them. The Laws would not permit a private Person to make a Chappel, raise an Altar, or consecrate an Image; otherwise all Places would in time be so cramm'd, from the Devotion of Women and weak Heads, that a Man should not set a foot, nor find Elbow-room, for Gods, and Shrines, consecrated Stuff. The like Providence had they (says *Rimer*) for the *Theatre*. No *Poet* under the Age of thirty or forty years was allow'd to present any Play to be acted. More of their Publick Money was spent about the *Chorus*, and other Charges and Decorations of their *Theatre*, than in all their Wars with the Kings of *Persia*. And when brought to their last Extremity, that no other Bank remain'd for them, wherewith to carry on a War, without which War they could not longer expect to be a People, the delicate turn us'd by *Demosthenes*, in starting the Motion, for applying this *Theatre-Money* to the War, is observ'd as a Master-piece of Address by the Orators. Did I say (quoth *Demo-*



*Demosthenes*) the Theatre-Money may be applied to the War? no, by Jove, not I.

Monasteries and Church-lands were never with us so Sacred.

The Romans, says *Rimer*, were a rougher sort of People; and wonderful jealous were they of the *Grecian Arts*, or of any Commerce with a Politer Nation. Till *Numa Pompilius*, very little had they of either Religion or Poetry among them. Nor made *He* use of it farther, than for the *Hymns* and *Anthems* at the Altars and Sacrifice: *Secular Poetry* had they none. And indeed at that time it was hardly safe for Poetry to stir from *Sanctuary*; for in the World, the rigid Fathers had given the Poets an ugly Name, calling them *Grassatores*; which, in *Modern Italian*, may be rendred *Banditi*.

It was with much ado, and under an Usurpation by the *Decemvirat*, that the Romans stooped to a Correspondence with Greece, for the Commodity of their Laws; which were not till then imported; and from thence we hear of the *Twelve Tables*.

As for the *Stage-Plays*; it was a Plague that first introduced them. They try, by that strange Worship, to appease their Gods; and avert the Judgment so heavy on them. But their first *Secular Plays*, says *Rimer*, were taught by *Livius Andronicus*, some two hundred Years after the *Twelve Tables* at Rome. He set up for some skill in this Dramatick way, Translating from the Greek.

After all the goodly Commendations and pretty things, by *Quintilian* acknowledg'd due to *Plautus* and *Terence*, frankly he concludes, *In Comœdiâ maximè claudicamus—Vix levem consequimur Umbram*; that the Roman is infinitely short of the Greek Comedy, hardly comes

up to the shadow of it. Horace would fain with some colour make good the Comparifon betwixt the Romans and the Greeks, on that Topick, to flatter *Augustus*. But *Virgil*, with no difadvantage to his Compliment, gave up the Cause.

*Excudent alii*——

*Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento.*

*Hæ tibi erunt Artes*——

Let them have all the Praises due to their polite Learning: To govern and to give Laws, be thefe thy Arts, O Cæfar! This is thy Glory without a Rival.

Upon the whole, fays *Rimer*; This Dramatick Poetry was like a *Forreign Plant* amongft the Romans, the Climate not very kindly, and cultivated but indifferently; fo might put forth Leaves and Blossoms, without yielding any Fruit of much Importance. *Athens* was the genuine Soil for it, there it took, there it flourish'd, and ran up to overtop every thing *Secular* and *Sacred*. There had this Poetry the Honour, the Poms, and the Dignity; their *Règalia*, and their *Pontificalia*. But the Romans mostly look'd no deeper than the Show. They took up with the outside and *Portico*; their Genius dwelt in their Eye; there they fed it, there indulg'd and pamper'd it immoderately: So that their *Theatres* and their *Amphitheatres*, fays *Rimer*, will always be remember'd, though their *Tragedy* and *Comedy* be only Shadow; or *Magni Nominis Umbra*. They reckon'd thefe Matters of *Wit* and *Speculation*, not fo confiftent with the feverity of an Active Warlike People: Something of their old *Saturn* lay heavy in their heads to the very laft. *Rimer's Short view of Tragedy, chap. 2.*

*Rapin* observes, That *Tragedy* of all parts of *Poesie*, is that which *Aristotle* has most discuss'd; and where he appears most exact. *Aristotle* alledges, that *Tragedy* is a publick *Lecture*, without comparison more instructive than *Philosophy*; because it teaches the *Mind* by the *Sense*, and rectifies the *Passions* by the *Passions* themselves, in calming by their emotion the troubles they excite in the *Heart*. The *Philosopher* had observ'd two important Faults in *Man* to be regulated, *Pride* and *Hard-Heartedness*; and he found for both these Vices a cure in *Tragedy*. For it makes *Man* modest, by representing the great *Masters of the Earth* humbled; and it makes him tender and merciful, by shewing him on the *Theatre* the strange Accidents of *Life*, and the unforeseen Disgraces, to which those of the highest *Quality* are subject. But because *Man* is naturally timorous, and compassionate, he may fall into another Extrem, to be either too fearful, or too full of pity; the too much *Fear* may shake the *Constancy* of *Mind*, and the too great *Compassion* may enfeeble the *Equity*. 'Tis the business of *Tragedy* to regulate these two Weaknesses; it prepares and arms him against Disgraces, by shewing them so frequent in the most considerable Persons; and he shall cease to fear *Ordinary* Accidents, when he sees such *Extraordinary* happen to the Highest part of Mankind. But as the End of *Tragedy* is to teach Men not to fear too weakly the Common Misfortunes, and to manage their fear; it serves also to teach them to spare their *Compassion*, for Objects that deserve it. For there is an Injustice in being mov'd at the Afflictions of those who deserve to be miserable. One may see without pity *Clytemnestra* slain by her Son *Orestes* in *Æschylus*, because she had cut the throat of *Agamemnon* her Husband; and one cannot see *Hippolytus*

die by the Plot of his Step-Mother *Phedra* in *Euripides*, without Compassion; because he dy'd not but for being Chast and Vertuous. This, says *Rapin*, to me seems, in short, the Design of *Tragedy*, according to the System of *Aristotle*, which to me appears admirable, but which has not been explain'd as it ought by his *Interpreters*, who (probably) did not well enough understand the Mystery, to unfold it as they ought. *Rap. Reflex. on Aristot. of Poesie, Part 2. Sect. xvii.*

*Rapin* does further remark, That the Faults of *Modern Tragedy* are ordinarily, that either the *Subjects* which are chosen are mean and frivolous; or the *Fable* is not well wrought, and the *Contrivance* not regular; Or that they are too much crowded with *Episodes*; Or that the *Characters* are not preserv'd and sustain'd; Or that the *Incidents* are not well prepar'd; Or that the *Machins* are forc'd; Or that, what is admirable fails in the probability; Or the probability is too plain and flat; Or that the *Surprises* are ill manag'd, the *Knots* ill ty'd, the *loosing* them not natural; the *Catastrophe's* precipitated; the *Thoughts* without Elevation; the *Expressions* without Majesty; the *Figures* without Grace; the *Passions* without colour; the *Discourse* without Life; the *Narrations* cold, the *Words* low, the *Language* improper; and all the *Beauties* false. They speak not enough to the heart of the Audience, which is the only Art of the Theatre, where nothing can be delightful but that which moves the Affections, and which makes impression on the Soul; little known is that *Rhetorick* which can lay open the *Passions* by all the natural degrees of their Birth, and of their Progress: Nor are those *Morals* at all in use, which are proper to mingle those different Interests, those opposite Glances, those clashing Maxims, those Reasons that destroy each other,

to ground the Incertitudes and Irresolutions, and to animate the *Theatre*. For the *Theatre* being essentially destin'd for *Action*, nothing ought to be idle, but all in agitation, by the thwarting of Passions that are founded on the different Interests that arise; or by the Embroilment that follows from the *Intrigue*. Likewise (says *Rapin*) there ought to appear no *Actor*, that carries not some design in his head, either to cross the designs of others, or to support his own; all ought to be in trouble, and no *Calm* to appear, till the *Action* be ended by the *Catastrophe*. Nor, finally, is it well understood, that it is not the admirable *Intrigue*, the surprising and wonderful Events, the extraordinary Incidents that make the Beauty of a *Tragedy*; it is the *Discourses* when they are *Natural* and *Passionate*. *Sophocles* was not more successful than *Euripides* on the *Theatre* at *Athens*, but by the *Discourse*; though the *Tragedies* of *Euripides* have more of *Action*, of *Morality*, of wonderful *Incidents*, than those of *Sophocles*. It is by these *Faults*, more or less great, that *Tragedy* in these days has so little effect on the Mind; that we no longer feel those agreeable *Trances*, that make the pleasure of the *Soul*; nor find those *Suspensions*, those *Ravishments*, those *Surprises*, those *Admirations*, that the ancient *Tragedy* caus'd; because the *Modern* has nothing of those astonishing and terrible Objects that affrighted, whilst they pleas'd the Spectators, and made those great Impressions on the *Soul*, by the Ministry of the *Passions*. In these days Men go from the *Theatre* as little mov'd as when they went in, and carry their *Heart* along with them *untoucht*, as they brought it: So that the pleasure they receive there, is become as Superficial, as that of *Comedy*; and our gravest *Tragedies* are (to speak properly) no more but *Heightened Comedies*. *Ibidem*, Sect. xxi.

*At first the Tragedy was void of Art ;  
A Song ; where each Man Danc'd, and Sung his Part,  
And of God Bacchus roaring out the Praise  
Sought a good Vintage for their Jolly days :  
Then Wine, and Joy, were seen in each Man's Eyes,  
And a fat Goat was the best Singer's prize.  
Thespis was first, who, all besmear'd with Lee,  
Began this pleasure for Posterity :  
And, with his Carted Actors, and a Song,  
Amus'd the People as he pass'd along.  
Next, Æschylus the different Persons plac'd,  
And with a better Masque his Players grac'd :  
Upon a Theatre his Verse express'd,  
And show'd his Hero with a Buskin dress'd.  
Then Sophocles, the Genius of his Age,  
Increas'd the Pomp, and Beauty of the Stage,  
Engag'd the Chorus Song in every part,  
And polish'd rugged Verse by Rules of Art :  
He, in the Greek, did those Perfections gain,  
Which the weak Latin never could attain.  
Our Pious Fathers, in their Priest-rid Age,  
As impious, and prophane, abhor'd the Stage :  
A Troop of silly Pilgrims, as 'tis said,  
Foolishly Zealous, scandalously Play'd  
(Instead of Heroes, and of Love's Complaints)  
The Angels, God, the Virgin, and the Saints.  
At last, right Reason did his Laws reveal,  
And show'd the Folly of their ill-plac'd Zeal,  
Silenc'd those Nonconformists of the Age,  
And rais'd the lawful Heroes of the Stage :  
Only th' Athenian Masque was laid aside,  
And Chorus by the Musick was supply'd.*

*Ingenious Love, inventive in new Arts,  
Mingled in Plays, and quickly touch'd our Hearts :  
This Passion never could resistance find,  
But knows the shortest Passage to the Mind.*

**Boileau's** Art of Poetry, pag. 32, 33, 34.

*Rimer* says, The *Chorus* was the Root and Original, and is certainly always the most necessary Part of *Tragedy* ; that the *Spectators* thereby are secured, that their *Poet* shall not juggle, or put upon them in the matter of *Place*, and *Time*, other than is just and reasonable for the Representation. And the *Poet*, says *Rimer*, has this benefit ; the *Chorus* is a goodly Show, so that he need not ramble from his Subject out of his Wits for some Foreign Toy or Hobby-Horse, to humour the Multitude. *Aristotle*, in his *Poëtica*, tells us of two *Senses* that must be pleas'd, our *Sight*, and our *Ears* ; And, says *Rimer*, it is in vain for a *Poet* (with *Bays* in the *Rehearsal*) to complain of Injustice, and the wrong Judgment in his Audience, unless these two *Senses* be gratified. *Rimer's* Short View of *Tragedy*, Chap. I.

But *Dryden* seems to be of another Opinion, in relation to the *Chorus* ; For (says he) if the *English Poets* have not yet brought the *Drama* to an absolute perfection, yet at least we have carried it much farther than those ancient *Greeks*, *Æschylus*, *Euripides* and *Sophocles* ; who beginning from a *Chorus*, cou'd never totally exclude it, as we have done, who find it an unprofitable Incumbrance, without any necessity of entertaining it amongst us ; and without the possibility of Establishing it here, unless it were supported by a Publick Charge. **Dryd.** Dedic. before his *Examen Poëticum*.

## Concerning Comedy.

**M**onsieur Hedelin, Abbot of *Aubignac*, tells us, That as for *Comedy*, *Donatus* seems to think it was invented by *Shepherds* and Country People, who us'd to dance about the Altars of *Apollo*; Sirnamed *Nomian*, and sing at the same time some *Hymns* in honour of him; But, says *Hedelin*, I had rather believe *Athenæus*, who makes it take its Rise with *Tragedy*, and that they were both consecrated to *Bacchus*, and not to *Apollo*: Except *Donatus* would judge of all *Theatral* Actions by the *Apollinary* Games, which indeed were *Scenick*, and celebrated to the Honour of *Apollo*. In fine, *Hedelin* concludes, That *Comedy* and *Tragedy* were born together; and accordingly we find in *Clemens Alexandrinus*, that the Invention of *Comedy* was attributed to one *Sisaron* of *Tearia*; it may be, says *Hedelin*, because he was the first that compos'd the *Hymns* of *Bacchus*, after the Sacrifice of the Goat by *Icarius*. And this, says *Hedelin*, may suffice to appease the Quarrels of the Learned upon the Origine of *Comedy*, since they are not agreed neither in Times, Places, nor Persons. *Hedelin's Art of the Stage, Book the 4th, Chap. 2.*

Monsieur *Hedelin* does farther observe, That *Comedy* has not the same Progress with *Tragedy*, it being long detain'd in Confusion and Disorder: Nay, even in *Aristophanes's* time, which was after *Sophocles* and *Euripides*, it was full of Satyrical Reflections, and Scandalous Slanders. It will (says *Hedelin*) be hard for us to mark the degrees of its progress, from the time that it was



a *Rural Hymn*, to that of its perfection upon the Stage; because, as *Aristotle* says, *It being not so Noble as Tragedy, there has been less care to make Observations upon it; and the Magistrates were a great while before they concern'd themselves in giving the Chorus's, but us'd to leave them to the Discretion of those who made the Comedy.* Nevertheless, says *Hedelin*, if I may venture to bring to light things buried in so long an Obscurity, I think that it begun to have *Actors* about the same time as *Tragedy* did, that is, under *Epicharmus*, the *Sicilian*, the Contemporary of *Thespis*; and before that time I have not observ'd any *Speakers*. And 'tis from this, that the *Sicilians* do maintain, That *Comedy* was invented at *Syracusa*, because *Epicharmus* was that Country-man: not that they can pretend that there was no *Comedy* before him, (for we have yet the Fragments of *Alcæa*, a *Comedy* two Hundred years before his time) but because *He* first introduc'd an *Actor* with the *Chorus*. We may say as much of *Sannyrion*, who was the first that added *Masks* and *Buffoons*, according to *Athenæus*; and the same of *Cratinus*, who settled three *Actors*, and made the whole Composition regular; the same of *Aristophanes*, who gave *Comedy* a further perfection; And so of all those whom *Diomedes* calls the first *Comick Poets*, though they came a great while after *Comedy* was invented. *Hedelin* *ibid.*

*Comedy*, says *Rapin*, is an Image of Common Life; its end is to shew on the Stage the faults of *Particulars*, in order to amend the faults of the *Publick*, and to correct the People through a fear of being render'd *Ridiculous*. So that which is most proper to excite Laughter, is that which is most essential to *Comedy*. That pleasant turn, that *Gayety* which can sustain the  
delicacy

*delicacy* of his *Character*, without falling into *Coldness*, nor into *Buffoonry*; that *fine Raillery*, which is the Flower of Wit, is the Talent which *Comedy* demands: but it must always be observ'd, that the *Ridiculing* part, for the Entertainment on the *Theatre*, ought to be no other but the Copy of the *Ridiculous* that is found in *Nature*. *Comedy* is as it should be, when the *Spectator* believes himself really in the Company of such Persons as he has represented, and takes himself to be in a Family whilst he is at the *Theatre*; and that he there sees nothing but what he sees in the World. For *Comedy*, says *Rapin*, is worth nothing at all, unless he know, and can compare the *Manners* that are exhibited on the Stage, with those of such Persons, as he has *Conversation* withal. 'Twas by this, that *Menander* had so great Success amongst the *Grecians*; and the *Romans* thought themselves in *Conversation*, whilst they sat beholding the *Comedies* of *Terence*; for they perceiv'd nothing but what they had been accustomed to find in ordinary Companies. 'Tis the great Art of *Comedy* to keep close to *Nature*, and never leave it; to have common Thoughts and Expressions fitted to the Capacity of all the World: For, says *Rapin*, it is most certainly true, that the most gross strokes of *Nature*, whatever they be, please always more, than the most delicate, that are not *Natural*: nevertheless Base and Vulgar Terms are not to be permitted on the *Theatre*, unless supported by some kind of *Wit*. The *Proverbs* and *Wise Sayings* of the *People* ought not to be suffer'd, unless they have some pleasant Meaning, and unless they are *Natural*. This is the most general Principle of *Comedy*; by which, whatever is represented, cannot fail to please; but without it, nothing can. 'Tis only by adhering to *Nature*, that the *Probability* can be maintain'd,

tain'd, which is the sole Infallible Guide, that may be follow'd on the *Theatre*. Without *Probability* all is lame and faulty, *with* it all goes well: none can run astray who follow it; and the most ordinary faults of *Comedy* happen from thence, that the *Decencies* are not well observ'd, nor the *Incidents* enough prepar'd. 'Tis likewise necessary to take heed that the *Colours* employ'd to prepare the *Incidents*, be not too gross, to leave to the *Spectator* the pleasure of finding out himself what they signifie. But the most ordinary Weakness of our *Comedies* is the *Unravelling*; scarce ever any, says *Rapin*, succeed well in that, by the difficulty there is in *untying* happily that Knot which had been tyed. It is easie to *wind* up an *Intrigue*, 'tis only the work of *Fancy*; but the *unravelling* is the pure and perfect Work of the *Judgment*. 'Tis this that makes the Success difficult, and if one would thereon make a little Reflection, he might find, that the most Universal fault of *Comedies*, is, that the *Catastrophe* of it is not *Natural*. It remains to examine, whether in *Comedy* the Images may be drawn greater than the Natural, the more to move the Minds of the Spectators, by more shining Portraits, and by stronger Impressions: that is to say, whether a *Poet* may make a *Miser*, more Covetous; a *Morose* Man, more morose and troublesome than the Original? To which *Rapin* answers, That *Plantus*, who studied to please the *Common People*, made them so, but *Terence*, who would please the *better sort*, confin'd himself within the Bounds of *Nature*, and be represented Vices, without making them either better or worse. *Rapin Reflex. on Arist. of Poessie, Part 2. Sect. xxv.*

Dryden tells us, That he values not a Reputation gain'd from *Comedy*; and that he thinks it, in its

own nature inferiour to all sorts of *Dramatick* writing. *He* says, *Low Comedy* especially requires, on the Writers part, much of Conversation with the *Vulgar*, and much of ill Nature in the Observation of their Follies. *Dryd. Pref. to the Mock-Astrologer.*

But in another place, *He* tells us how difficult it is to write *Comedy* well:

*Of all Dramatick Writing, Comick Wit,  
As 'tis the best; so 'tis most hard to hit,  
For it lies all in level to the Eye,  
Where all may judge, and each defect may spie.  
Humour is that which every day we meet,  
And therefore known as every publick Street;  
In which, if e're the Poet go astray,  
You all can point, 'twas there he lost his way.  
But, what's so common, to make pleasant too,  
Is more than any Wit can always do,  
For 'tis, like Turks, with Hen and Rice to treat;  
To make Regalio's out of Common Meat.*

*Dryd. Epilogue to the Wild Gallant.*

## Concerning the Epick, or Heroick Poem.

**T**He *Epick* Poem, says *Rapin*, is that which is the greatest and most noble in *Poesie*; it is the greatest Work that Humane Wit is capable of. All the Nobleness, and all the Elevation of the most perfect Genius, can hardly suffice to form one such as is requisite for

for an *Heroick Poet* ; the difficulty of finding together *Fancy* and *Judgment*, heat of *Imagination*, and *Sobriety* of *Reason*, *Precipitation* of *Spirit*, and *Solidity* of *Mind*, causes the rareness of this Character, and of this happy Temperament which makes a *Poet* accomplish'd ; it requires great *Images*, and yet a greater *Wit* to form them. To conclude, There must be a Judgment so solid, a Discernment so exquisite, such perfect Knowledge of the Language, in which he writes ; such obstinate Study, profound Meditation, vast Capacity, that scarce whole Ages can produce one *Genius* fit for an *Epick Poem*. And, says *Rapin*, it is an Enterprize so bold, that it cannot fall into a Wise Man's Thoughts, but affright him. Yet how many *Poets* have we seen of late days, who, without *Capacity*, and without *Study*, have dar'd to undertake these sort of *Poems* ; having no other Foundation, but only the heat of their *Imagination*, and some *briskness* of *Spirit*. *Rap. Reflex. on Aristot. of Poesie, Part 2. Sect. 2.*

*By painful Steps we are at last got up  
Parnassus Hill, on whose bright Airy Top  
The Epick Poets so Divinely show,  
And with just Pride behold the Rest below.  
Heroick Poems have a just pretence  
To be the utmost reach of Human Sence,  
A Work of such inestimable Worth,  
There are but Two the World has yet brought forth,  
Homer and Virgil : with what awful Sound  
Do those meer Words the Ears of Poets wound !  
Just as a Changeling seems below the Rest  
Of Men, or rather is a two-legg'd Beast,  
So these Gigantick Souls amaz'd we find  
As much above the rest of Human Kind.*

Nature's whole Strength united! Endless Fame,  
 And Universal Shouts attend their Name.  
 Read Homer once, and you can read no more,  
 For all things else appear so dull and poor,  
 Verse will seem Prose, yet often on him look,  
 And you will hardly need another Book.

**Bulgr.** Essay on Poetry.

Sir William Temple tells us, That no Composition requires so many several Ingredients, or of more different sorts, than the *Heroick* Poem; nor that to excel in any Qualities, there are necessary so many Gifts of Nature, and so many Improvements of Learning and of Art. For there must be an Universal *Genius*, of great Compass as well as great Elevation. There must be sprightly Imagination or Fancy, fertile in a Thousand Productions, ranging over infinite Ground, piercing into every Corner, and, by the light of that true *Poetical Fire*, discovering a thousand little Bodies or Images in the World, and Similitudes among them, unseen to common Eyes, and which could not be discover'd, without the Rays of that Sun.

Besides the Heat of Invention, says Sir William Temple, and liveliness of Wit, there must be the coldness of good Sense, and soundness of Judgment, to distinguish between things and conceptions, which at first sight, or upon short glances, seem alike, to choose among infinite Productions of *Wit* and *Fancy*, which are worth preserving and cultivating, and which are better stifled in the Birth, or thrown away when they are born, as not worth bringing up. Without the Forces of *Wit*, all Poetry is flat and languishing; and without the Succours of *Judgment*, 'tis wild and extravagant. The true Wonder of *Poesie* is, That such Contraries must

must meet to compose it, a Genius both penetrating and solid ; in Expression both Delicacy and Force ; and the Frame or Fabrick of a true *Poem*, must have something both sublime and just, amazing and agreeable. There must be a great Agitation of Mind to invent, a great Calm to judge and correct ; there must be upon the same Tree, and at the same Time, both *Flower* and *Fruit*. To work up this Metal into exquisite Figure, there must be employ'd the *Fire*, the *Hammer*, the *Chisel*, and the *File*. There must be a general Knowledge both of *Nature* and of *Arts* ; and to go the lowest that can be, there are required *Genius*, *Judgment*, and *Application* ; for without *this last*, all the rest will not serve turn, and none ever was a great *Poet*, that applied himself much to any thing else.

But, says Sir *William Temple*, when I speak of *Poetry*, I mean not an *Ode* or an *Elegy*, a *Song* or a *Satyr*, nor by a *Poet* the *Composer* of any of *These*, but of a *just Poem* ; And after all I have said, 'tis no wonder, there should be so few have appeared, in any Parts or any Ages of the World, or that such as have, should be so much admir'd, and have almost *Divinity* ascrib'd to them, and to their Works. *Temple's Essay of Poetry*, pag. 15, 16, 17.

*Dryden* says, It is worth our consideration, a little to examine how much the *Hypercriticks* of *English Poetry* differ, in their dislike of *Heroick Poetry*, from the Opinion of the *Greek* and *Latin* Judges of Antiquity ; from the *Italians* and *French* who have succeeded them ; and indeed, from the general taste and approbation of all Ages. *Heroick Poetry*, says *Dryden*, which they condemn, has ever been esteem'd, and ever will be, the greatest Work of *Humane Nature* : In that rank has *Aristotle* plac'd it ; and *Longinus* is so full of the

the like Expressions, That he abundantly confirms the others Testimony. *Horace* as plainly delivers his Opinion, and particularly praises *Homer* in these Verses :

*Trojani Belli Scriptorem, maxime Iolli,  
Dum tu declamas Romæ, Præneste relegi :  
Qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,  
Plenius ac melius Chrysippo & Crantore dicit.*

And in another place, modestly excluding himself from the Number of *Poets*, because he only writ *Odes* and *Satyrs*, he tells you a *Poet* is such an one,

—Cui mens Divinior, atque os  
Magna Sonaturum.

Quotations, says *Dryden*, are superfluous in an Establish'd Truth ; otherwise I could reckon up amongst the *Moderns*, all the *Italian* Commentators on *Aristotle's* Book of *Poetry* ; amongst the *French*, the greatest in this Age, *Boileau* and *Rapin* : the latter of which is alone sufficient, were all other *Criticks* lost, to teach anew the Rules of Writing. Any Man, says *Dryden*, who will seriously consider the nature of an *Epick* Poem, how it agrees with that of *Poetry* in general, which is to *instruct*, and to *delight* ; what *Actions* it describes, and what *Persons* they are chiefly whom it informs ; will find it a *Work*, which indeed is full of difficulty in the Attempt, but admirable when 'tis well perform'd. *Dryd.* *Apology for Heroick Poetry.*



## Concerning the Elegy.

**T**He *Elegy*, says *Rapin*, by the quality of its name, is destin'd to *Tears* and *Complaints*: and therefore ought to be of a *doleful* Character. But afterwards it was us'd in subjects of *Tenderness*, as in *Love-Matters*, and the like. The *Latins* have been more successful therein (by what appears to us) than the *Greeks*. For we have but little remaining of *Philetas* and *Tyrtæus*, who were famous in *Greece* for this kind of Verse. They who have writ *Elegy* best amongst the *Latins*, are *Tibullus*, *Propertius*, and *Ovid*. *Rap.* Reflex. on *Aristot.* of *Poesie*, Part 2. Sect. xxix.

*Soft Elegy, design'd for Grief, and Tears,  
Was first devis'd to grace some Mournful Hearse:  
Since to a brisker Note 'tis taught to move,  
And cloaths our gayest Passions, Joy and Love.  
But, who was first Inventer of the Kind,  
Criticks have sought, but never yet could find.*

*Oldham*, in Imitat. of *Horace's Art of Poetry*,  
pag. 8.

*The Elegy, that loves a mournful Stile,  
With unbound hair weeps at a Funeral Pile,  
It paints the Lover's Torments, and Delights,  
A Mistress Flatters, Threatens, and Invites:  
But well these Raptures if you'll make us see,  
You must know Love, as well as Poetry.  
I hate those lukewarm Authors, whose forc'd Fire,  
In a cold Stile, describes a hot Desire,*

*That*

*That sigh by Rule, and raging in cold blood,  
 Their sluggish Muse whip to an Amorous mood;  
 Their feign'd Transports appear but flat and vain;  
 They always sigh, and always hug their Chain,  
 Adore their Prison, and their Suff'rings bless,  
 Make Sense and Reason quarrel as they please.  
 'Twas not of Old in this affected Tone  
 That smooth Tibullus made his Amorous moan;  
 Nor Ovid, when, instructed from above,  
 By Nature's Rules he taught the Art of Love.*  
**Boileau's Art of Poetry.**

*Their greatest fault who in this kind have writ,  
 Is not defect in Words, nor want of Wit;  
 But should this Muse harmonious Numbers yield,  
 And every Couplet be with Fancy fill'd,  
 If yet a just Coherence be not made  
 Between each Thought, and the whole Model laid  
 So right, that every step may higher rise,  
 Like goodly Mountains, till they reach the Skies;  
 Trifles like such perhaps of late have past,  
 And may be lik'd a while, but never last;  
 'Tis Epigram, 'tis Point, 'tis what you will,  
 But not an Elegy, nor writ with Skill,  
 No \* Panegyrick, nor a † Cooper's- Hill.* }  
*\* Waller's, † Denham's.*

**Bulgr. Essay on Poetry.**

*Rapin tells us, That the French distinguish not their Elegies from Heroick; and that they call indifferently Elegy, what they please; whereby the distinction of the true Character of this Verse seems not yet well establish'd among them.*

## Concerning the Pindarique Ode.

**R**apin remarks, That the *Ode* ought to have as much Nobleness, Elevation, and Transport, as the *Eglogue* has of Simplicity and Modesty. 'Tis not only the *Wit* that heightens it, but likewise the *Matter*. For its use is to sing the Praises of the *Gods*, and to celebrate the Illustrious Actions of *Great Men*; so it requires, to sustain all the *Majesty* of its Character, an exalted Nature, a great Wit, a daring Fancy, an Expression Noble and Sparkling, yet pure and correct. All the briskness and life which Art has by its Figures, is not sufficient to heighten *Ode* so far as its Character requires. But the reading alone of *Pindar*, says *Rapin*, is more capable to inspire this *Genius*, than all my *Reflexions*. **Rap.** *Reflex. on Aristot. Treatise of Poesie, Part 2. Sect. xxx.*

*A higher flight, and of a happier Force  
Are Odes, the Muses most unruly Horse;  
That bounds so fierce, the Rider has no rest,  
But foams at Mouth, and moves like one possess'd.  
The Poet here must be indeed inspired,  
With Fury too, as well as Fancy fired.  
Cowley might boast to have perform'd this Part,  
Had He with Nature joyn'd the Rules of Art;  
But ill Expression gives sometimes Allay  
To that rich Fancy, which can ne're decay:  
Tho' all appear in Heat and Fary done,  
The Language still must soft and easie run.  
These Laws may seem a little too severe,  
But Judgment yields, and Fancy governs there;*

*Which, though extravagant, this Muse allows,  
And makes the Work much easier than it shows.*

**Vulgr.** Essay on Poetry.

Dryden observes to us, That the *Pindarique Verse* allows more Latitude than any other. Every one, says he, knows it was introduc'd into our Language, in this Age, by the happy Genius of Mr. Cowley. The seeming easiness of it, has made it spread; but it has not been consider'd enough, to be so well cultivated. It languishes in almost every hand but *his*, and some very few, whom (says Dryden, to keep the rest in Countenance) I do not name. He, indeed, has brought it as near perfection as was possible in so short a time. But if, says Dryden, I may be allow'd to speak my Mind modestly, and without injury to his Sacred Althes, somewhat of the Purity of *English*, somewhat of more equal Thoughts, somewhat of sweetness in the *Numbers*, in one word, somewhat of a *finer turn* and more *Lyrical Verse* is yet wanting. As for the Soul of it, which consists in the Warmth and Vigor of Fancy, the Masterly Figures, and the Copiousness of Imagination, He has excell'd all others in this kind. Yet, says Dryden, if the Kind it self be capable of more Perfection, though rather in the *Ornamental* parts of it, than the *Essential*, what Rules of Morality or respect have I broken, in naming the Defects, that they may hereafter be amended? *Imitation* is a nice point, and there are few Poets who deserve to be *Models* in all they write. Since Pindar was the Prince of *Lyrick* Poets; let me, says Dryden, have leave to say, that in imitating him, our *Numbers* shou'd for the most part be *Lyrical*: for Variety, or rather where the Majesty of the Thought requires it, they may be stretch'd to the *English Heroick* of five Feet, and

and to the *French Alexandrine* of six. But the *Ear* must preside, and direct the Judgment to the choice of *Numbers*: Without the Nicety of this, the Harmony of *Pindarique Verse* can never be compleat; the cadency of one Line must be a Rule to that of the next; and the sound of the former must slide gently into that which follows; without leaping from one Extream into another. It must be done like the *Shadowings* of a *Picture*, which fall by degrees into a darker Colour. I shall be glad, says *Dryden*, if I have so explain'd myself as to be understood, but if I have not, *quod nequeo dicere* & *sententio tantum* must be my Excuse. There remains (says *Dryden*) much more to be said on this Subject; but to avoid envy, I will be silent: What I have said is the general Opinion of the best Judges, and in a manner has been forc'd from me, by seeing a noble sort of *Poetry* so happily restor'd by one Man, and so grossly Copied by almost *all the rest*: A *Musical Ear*, and a *great Genius*, if another Mr. *Cowley* could arise, in another Age may bring it to perfection. *Dryd.* Pref. to the 2d Part of Poetical Miscellanies.

Mr. *Norris* says, That the *Pindarick* is the highest and most Magnificent kind of Writing in Verse, and consequently fit only for great and noble Subjects, such as are as *boundless* as its own *Numbers*: The nature of which is to be loose and free, and not to keep one settled pace, but sometimes like a gentle Stream to glide along peaceably within its own Channel, and sometimes, like an impetuous Torrent, to *roul* on extravagantly, and carry all before it. *Norris's* Miscellan. pag. 8.

Dr. *Sprat* says, That if the *Pindarique Verse* be disgusting to any, by reason of the *Irregularity* of its *Numbers*, they may observe, that this very thing makes

that kind of *Poesie* fit for all manner of Subjects: for the *Pleasant*, the *Grave*, the *Amorous*, the *Heroick*, the *Philosophical*, the *Moral*, and the *Divine*. Besides this they will find, that the frequent alteration of the *Rhime* and *Feet*, affects the Mind with a more various delight, while it is soon apt to be tir'd by the settled pace of any one constant Measure. But that for which (says Dr. Sprat) I think this *inequality* of *Number* chiefly to be preferr'd, is its nearer affinity to *Prose*: from which all other Kinds of *English* Verse are so far distant, that it is very seldom found, that the same Man excels in both ways. But now this loose and *unconfin'd* Measure, has all the Grace and Harmony of the most *Confin'd*. And withal, it is so large and free, that the practice of it will only *exalt*, not *corrupt* our *Prose*: which is certainly the most useful kind of Writing of all others: for it is the Style of all Business and Conversation.

**Sprat** in Cowley's *Life*.

Cowley, in his Preface, tells us, That though the *Liberty* of *Pindarique* Verse, may incline a Man to believe it easie to be compos'd, yet the Undertaker will find it otherwise.

*Horace*, who propos'd the *Odes* of *Pindar* for the Model of those he writ in *Latin*, quitted immediately the *Numbers* and the *turn* of that Author's Verse, of which he found the *Latin* Tongue incapable.

## Concerning Songs or Sonnets, Madrigals, Rondelays, &c.

**R**apin tells us, That the *Character* of the *smaller Verse*, and of all the little Works of *Poetry*, requires that they be *Natural*, together with a *Delicacy*; for seeing the *little Subjects* afford no Beauty of themselves, the Wit of the *Poet* must supply that want out of its own Stock. The *Sonnet*, says *Rapin*, is of a *Character* that may receive more of *Greatness* in its Expression, than the other little Pieces; but nothing is more Essential to it, than the happy and natural turn of the *Thought* that composes it. Now, says *Rapin*, it is proper to know what this *Delicacy* is, that ought to be the *Character* of the *smaller Verse*, or the little Works of *Poetry*, that so we may understand all that belongs to them. A *Word* may be *delicate* several ways; either by a *subtle Equivocation*, which contains a *Mystery* in the Ambiguity; or by a *hidden Meaning*, which speaks all out, whilst it pretends to say nothing; or by some fierce and *bold Stroke* under *Modest Terms*; or by something *brisk* and *pleasant*, under a serious Air; or, lastly, by some *fine Thought*, under a simple and homely Expression. We find, says *Rapin*, all these sorts of *Delicacy* in some of the *Ancients*, as in the *Socrates* of *Plato*, in *Sappho*, in *Theocritus*, in *Anacreon*, in *Horace*, in *Catullus*, in *Petronius*, and in *Martial*. These are all great *Models* of this *Character*; of which the *French* have only in their Tongue *Marot*, Gentleman of the Bed-Chamber to *Francis the First*. He had an admirable *Genius* for this way of Writing; and whoever have

have been successful in it since, have only Copied him. *Voiture*, says *Rapin*, had a *Genius* for this *Character*; if he had not a little corrupted his Wit by the reading of the *Spaniards* and *Italians*. If these *Words* are affected, they lose their Grace, because they become cold and flat, when they are far-fetch'd. But the most general fault in these little Pieces of *Poetry*, is, when one would cram them with too much Wit. This is the ordinary Vice of the *Spaniards* and *Italians*, who labour always to say things finely. But this (says *Rapin*) is no very good Character; for they cease to be *Natural*, whilst they take care to be *Witty*. **Rap.** *Reflex.* &c. Part 2d. *Seft.* xxxii.

*A faultless Sonnet, finish'd well, would be  
Worth tedious Volumes of loose Poetry.  
A hundred Scribling Authors, without ground  
Believe they have this only Phoenix found:  
When yet th' exactest scarce have two or three  
Among whole Tomes, from Faults and Censure free.  
The rest, but little read, regarded less,  
Are shovel'd to the Pastry from the Press.  
Closing the Sense within the measur'd time,  
'Tis hard to fit the Reason to the Rhime.*

**Boileau's** Art of Poetry, English'd by Sir Will.  
Soame.

*First then of Songs, which now so much abound,  
Without his Song no Fop is to be found,  
A most Offensive Weapon which he draws  
On all he meets against Apollo's Laws:  
Tho' nothing seems more easie, yet no part  
Of Poetry requires a nicer Art;*



*For as in rows of richest Pearl there lies  
 Many a Blemish that escapes our Eyes,  
 The least of which Defects is plainly shown  
 In some small Ring, and brings the Value down;  
 So Songs should be to just Perfection wrought ;  
 Yet where can we see one without a fault ;  
 Exact Propriety of Words and Thought ?  
 Expression easie, and the Fancy high,  
 Yet that not seem to creep, nor this to fly ;  
 No Words transpos'd, but in such Order all,  
 As, tho' hard wrought, may seem by chance to fall.  
 Here, as in all things else, is most unfit  
 Bare Ribaldry, that poor Pretence to Wit.  
 Not that warm Thoughts of the transporting Joy,  
 Can shock the Chastest, or the nicest Cloy ;  
 But Obscene Words, too gross to move Desire,  
 Like heaps of Fewel do but choak the Fire.*

*Bulgr. Essay on Poetry.*

## Concerning the Epigram.

**R***Apin remarks, That the Epigram, of all the Works  
 in Verse that Antiquity has produc'd, is the least  
 considerable, yet this too has its Beauty. This Beauty  
 consists either in the delicate turn, or in a lucky Word.  
 The Greeks have understood this sort of Poesie otherwise  
 than the Latins. The Greek Epigram runs upon the  
 turn of a Thought that is natural, but fine and subtle.  
 The Latin Epigram, by a false taste that sway'd in the  
 beginning of the decay of the pure Latin Stile, endea-*

*ours*

vours to surprise the Mind by some *nipping Word*, which is call'd a *Point*. *Catullus* writ after the former manner, which is of a *finer* Character; for he endeavours to close a Natural Thought within a delicate *turn* of Words, and within the Simplicity of a very soft Expression. *Martial*, says *Rapin*, was in some manner the Author of this other way, that is to say, to terminate an ordinary thought by some *Word* that is *surprising*. After all, Men of a good taste, prefer'd the way of *Catullus*, before that of *Martial*; there being more of true delicacy in *that*, than in *this*. And in these latter Ages, says *Rapin*, we have seen a Noble *Venetian*, named *Andreas Naugerius*, who had an exquisite discernment; and who, by a natural *Antipathy* against all that which is called *Point*, which he judg'd to be of an ill relish, Sacrific'd every year in Ceremony a Volume of *Martial's Epigrams* to the *Manes* of *Catullus*, in Honour to his Character, which he judg'd was to be prefer'd to that of *Martial*. In conclusion, *Rapin* tells us, that the *Epigram* is a sort of *Verse*, in which a Man has little Success; for it is a meer *lucky hit*, if it prove well; and an *Epigram*, unless it be admirable, is little worth; and it is so rare to make them *admirable*, that 'tis well if a Man can make one in his whole life time. **Rap.** *Reflex. on Aristot. Treatise of Poësie, Part 2. Sect. xxxi.*

*The Epigram, with little Art compos'd,  
Is one good Sentence in a Distich clos'd.  
These Points, that by Italians first were priz'd,  
Our Ancient Authors knew not, or despis'd.*

**Boileau's Art of Poetry, pag 21.**

Sir William Temple says, There were (indeed) certain *Fairies* in the old Regions of Poetry, called *Epigrams*, which

which seldom reached above the Stature of Two, or Four, or Six Lines, and which being so short, were all turned upon *Conceit*, or some sharp Hits of Fancy or Wit. The only Ancient of this kind among the *Latins*, were the *Priapeia*, which were little *Voluntaries* or *Ex-temporaries*, written upon the ridiculous Wooden Statues of *Priapus*, among the Gardens of *Rome*. In the decays of the *Roman* Learning and Wit, as well as Language; *Martial*, *Ausonius*, and others, fell into this Vein, and applied it indifferently to *all* Subjects which was before Restrained to *one*, and drest it something more cleanly than it was Born. This Vein of *Conceit*, says *Temple*, seem'd proper for such *Scraps* or *Splinters*, into which *Poetry* was broken, and was so eagerly followed, as almost to over-run all that was composed in our several Modern Languages; The *Italian*, the *French*, the *Spanish* as well as *English*, were for a great while full of nothing else but *Conceit*: It was an Ingredient, that gave taste to Compositions which had little of themselves; 'twas a Sauce that gave Point to Meat that was flat, and some Life to Colours that were fading; And in short, Those who could not furnish *Spirit*, supplied it with this *Salt*, which may preserve Things or Bodies that are Dead; but is for ought I know, of little use to the Living, or necessary to Meats that have much or pleasing Tastes of their own. However it were, this Vein first over-flow'd our Modern *Poetry*, and with so little distinction, or judgment, that we would have *Conceit* as well as *Rhime* in every two Lines, and run through all our long Scribbles as well as the Short, and the whole Body of the Poem, whatever it is: This was just as if a Building should be nothing but Ornament, or Cloaths nothing but

Trimming; as if a Face should be cover'd over with black Patches, or a Gown with Spangles, which is all I shall say of it. *Temple's Essay of Poetry, pag. 48, 49.*

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## Concerning Burlesque.

SIR *William Temple* observes to us, That one Vein which has enter'd and helpt to corrupt our Modern *Poesie*, is that of *Ridicule*, as if nothing pleas'd but what made one laugh; which yet comes from two very different Affections of the Mind; for as Men have no disposition to laugh at things they are most pleas'd with, so they are very little pleas'd with many things they laugh at. But this mistake is very general, and such Modern *Poets*, as found no better way of pleasing, thought they could not fail of it, by *Ridiculing*. This was encourag'd by finding Conversation run so much into the same Vein, and the Wits in Vogue to take up with that part of it, which was formerly left to those that were call'd *Fools*, and were used in great Families, only to make the Company laugh. What Opinion the *Romans* had of this Character, appears in those Lines of *Horace*:

——— *Absentem qui rodit amicum,  
Qui non defendit alio culpante, Solutos  
Qui captat risus Hominum, famamq; dicacis,  
Fingere qui non visa potest, Commissa tacere  
Qui nequit, Hic Niger est, Hunc tu Romane Caveto.*

And

And 'tis pity, says *Temple*, the Character of a Wit, in one Age, should be so like that of a Black in another.

This Vein of *Burlesque*, or *Ridiculing*, began first in Verse, with an *Italian* Poem, called *La Secchia Rapita*, was pursued by *Scarron* in *French*, with his *Virgil Travesty*, and in *English* by Sir *John Mince*, *Hudibras*, and *Cotton*, and with greater height of *Burlesque* in the *English*, than I think in any other Language. But (says Sir *William Temple*) let the Execution, be what it will, the Design, the Custom, and Example are very pernicious to *Poetry*, and indeed, to all Virtue and good Qualities among Men, which must be dishearten'd, by finding how unjustly and undistinguish'd they fall under the lash of *Raillery*, and this Vein of *Ridiculing* the Good as well as the Ill, the Guilty and the Innocent together. 'Tis a very poor, though common pretence to *Merit*, to make it appear by the Faults of other Men. A mean Wit or Beauty may pass in a Room, where the rest of the Company are allowed to have none; 'tis something to sparkle among *Diamonds*; but to shine among *Pebbles*, is neither Credit nor Value worth the pretending. Sir *Will. Temple's* Essay of Poetry, pag. 49, &c.

*The dull Burlesque appear'd with impudence,  
And pleas'd by Novelty, in spite of Sence.  
All, except trivial Points, grew out of date;  
Parnassus spoke the Cant of Belinsgate:  
Boundless and Mad, disorder'd Rhime was seen:  
Disguis'd Apollo chang'd to Harlequin.  
This Plague, which first in Country Towns began,  
Cities and Kingdoms quickly over-ran;  
The dullest Scriblers some Admirers found,  
And the Mock-Tempest was a while renown'd:*

*But this low Stuff the Town at last despis'd,  
 And scorn'd the Folly that they once had priz'd;  
 Distinguish'd Dull, from Natural and Plain,  
 And left the Villages to Fleckno's Reign.  
 Let not so mean a Stile your Muse debase;  
 But learn from Butler the Buffooning Grace:  
 And let Burlesque in Ballads be employ'd;  
 Yet noise Bumbast carefully avoid.*

**Boileau's** Art of Poetry, pag. 5, 6.

*Rimer* tells us, That among the *French*, not many years since, was observ'd a most vicious Appetite, and immoderate Passion for *Burlesque*. Which sort of Verse had been currant in *Italy* an Hundred years, before e're they pass'd to this side the *Alps*; but when once they had their turn in *France*, so right to their humour, they over-ran all; nothing Wise or Sober could stand in their way. All were possess'd with the Spirit of *Burlesque*, from *Doll* in the Dairy, to the Matrons at Court, and Maids of Honour. Nay, says *Rimer*, so far went the *Frenzy*, that no Bookseller would meddle on any terms without *Burlesque*; insomuch that *Ann.* 1649, was at *Paris* Printed a serious Treatise with this Title,

— *La Passion de nostre Seigneur, En vers Burlesques.*

**Rimer's** Short view of Tragedy, Chap. 1.

The *Burlesque* Verse, consisting of Eight Syllables or Four Feet, is that which our Excellent *Hudibras* has chosen. The worth of his Poem, says *Dryden*, is too well known to need my Commendation, and he is above my Censure: His *Satyr* is of the *Varronian* kind, though

though unmix'd with *Prose*. The choice of his *Numbers* is suitable enough to his Design, as *he* has manag'd it. But in any other Hand, the shortness of his Verse, and the quick returns of Rhime, says *Dryden*, had debas'd the Dignity of Stile. And besides, the double Rhime (a necessary Companion of *Burlesque* writing) is not so proper for Manly *Satyr*, for it turns earnest too much to *Jest*, and gives us a Boyish kind of Pleasure. It tickles awkwardly, with a kind of pain, to the best sort of Readers; we are pleas'd ungratefully, and, if I may say so, against our liking. We thank him not for giving us that unseasonable Delight, when we know he cou'd have given us a better, and more solid. He might have left that Task to others, who not being able to put in Thought, can only make us grin with the Excrease of a Word of two or three Syllables in the close. 'Tis indeed, says *Dryden*, below so great a Master to make use of such a little Instrument. But his good Sense is perpetually shining through all he writes; it affords us not the time of finding Faults: We pass through the levity of his *Rhime*, and are immediately carried into some admirable useful Thought. After all, says *Dryden*, he has chosen *this kind of Verse*; and has written the best in it: And had he taken another, *he* would always have excell'd.

*Dryden* does here also declare, That for his part, he prefers the Verse of *Ten Syllables*, which we call the *English Heroique*, to that of *Eight*. For, says *he*, this sort of *Number* is more Roomy. The Thought can turn it self with greater ease, in a larger compass. When the *Rhime* comes too thick upon us, it streightens the Expression; we are thinking of the close, when we should be employ'd in adorning the Thought. It makes a *Poet* giddy with turning in a Space too narrow for his Imagination. He loses many Beauties without

without gaining one Advantage; for, says *Dryden*, a *Burlesque Rhime*, I have already concluded to be none; or if it were, 'tis more easily purchas'd in *Ten Syllables*, than in *Eight*: In both Occasions, says *Dryden*, 'tis as in a *Tennis-Court*, where the strokes of greater force are given, when we strike out, and play at length. *Tassone* and *Boileau* have left us the best Examples of this way, in the *Secchia Rapita*, and the *Lutrin*. And next them, *Merlin Coccajus* in his *Baldus*. *Dryd. Dedic. before the Translat. of Juvenal*, pag. 48, 49.

The Grace and Beauties of *Burlesque* do chiefly consist in a disproportion between the *Stile* in which we speak of a thing, and its true *Idea*: This is the distinguishing Mark of *French* and *Italian Burlesque*, of which there seems to be two sorts; as when low and mean Expressions are us'd to represent the greatest Events, as in *Scarron's Virgil-Travesty*; or great and lofty Terms to describe Common Things, as in *Boileau's Lutrin*, and *Tassone's Secchia Rapita*. Good Sense and Manners ought to be preserv'd, or *Burlesque* dwindles to Buffoonry, and the Dialect of the *Mob*. As for the way of describing small things in pompous terms, though it admits of more Sense and fine Expressions, and is also for some time pleasant to the Reader, by the Air of Gravity and ridiculous Affectation, with which Trifles are related as mighty Matters; yet, says my *Author*, he soon grows weary with it, as with most long-winded Poems; and if any will read over *Tassone*, though some things will extreamly delight him, I doubt not, says the same *Author*, but that he will find this true. *Pet. Motteux in the Gentlem. Journ. January, 1693.*



## Concerning Lampoons.

**D***Ryden* remarks, That that sort of *Satyr*, which is known in *England* by the name of *Lampoon*, is a dangerous sort of *Weapon*, and for the most part unlawful. We have no *Moral* right on the *Reputation* of other *Men*. 'Tis taking from them, what we cannot restore to them. How remote (says *Dryden*) are for the most part these *Lampooners*, in common justice, from the choice of such *Persons* as are the proper Subject of *Satyr*! And how little *Wit* they bring, for the Support of their *Injustice*! The weaker *Sex* is their most Ordinary Theme: And the Best and Fairest are sure to be the most severely handled. Amongst *Men*, those who are prosperously unjust, are intitled to a *Panegyrick*. But afflicted *Virtue* is insolently stabb'd with all manner of *Reproaches*. No *Decency* is consider'd, no *Fulsomness* omitted; no *Venom* is wanting, as far as *Dullness* can supply it. For there is a perpetual Dearth of *Wit*; a Barrenness of good *Sense* and *Entertainment*. The neglect of the *Readers*, will soon put an end to this sort of *Scribbling*. There can be no *Pleasantry* where there is no *Wit*: No *Impression* can be made, where there is no *Truth* for the *Foundation*.  
*Dryd.* Dedic. before the *Translat.* of *Juvenal*, pag. 35, 36.

*Tet these are Pearls to your Lampooning Rhimes,  
 T' abuse your selves more dully than the Times.  
 Scandal, the Glory of the English Nation,  
 Is worn to Raggs, and scribbld out of Fashion.  
 Such harmless Thrusts, as if, like Fencers wise,  
 They had agreed their Play before their Prize:*

Faith,

Faith, they may hang their Harps upon the Willows,  
'Tis just like Children when they box with Pillows.

**Dryd.** in an Epilogue. See *Miscellan. Poems*,  
pag. 294.

Our Poet has a different Taste of Wit,  
Nor will to common Vogue himself submit.  
Let some admire the Fops, whose Talents lie  
In venting dull insipid Blasphemy;  
He swears, he cannot with those Terms dispence,  
Nor will be damn'd for the repute of Sense.  
Wit's Name was never to Prophaneness due,  
For then you see he could be Witty too:  
He could Lampoon the State, and Libel Kings,  
But that he's Loyal, and knows better things,  
Than Fame, whose guilty Birth from Treason springs. }  
He likes not Wit, which can't a Licence claim,  
To which the Author dares not set his Name.  
Wit should be open, court each Reader's Eye,  
Not lurk in sly unprinted Privacy.  
But Criminal Writers, like dull Birds of Night,  
For Weakness, or for Shame, avoid the Light;  
May such a Jury for their Audience have,  
And from the Bench, not Pit, their Doom receive.  
May they the Tow'r for their due Merits share,  
And a just Wreath of Hemp, not Laurel wear.

**Joh. Oldham**, pag. 112. the 3d Edition.

I love sharp Satyr, from Obsceneness free;  
Not Impudence, that Preaches Modesty:  
Our English, who in Malice never fail,  
Hence, in Lampoons and Libels, learnt to Rail;  
Pleasant Detraction, that by Singing goes  
From Mouth to Mouth, and as it Marches grows!

Our

*Our freedom in our Poetry we see,  
That Child of Joy, begot by Liberty.*

Sir ~~Will~~: Soame, in his Translat. of Boileau's  
*Art of Poetry*, pag. 25, 26.

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*Concerning the English Poetry; and  
their Language in relation to Po-  
etry.*

M<sup>R</sup>. Rimer can by no means allow of the reason, which Sir Philip Sidney gives, why Poets are less esteem'd in England, than in the other famous Nations, to be want of Merit: Nor is he of their Opinion, who say, that Wit and Wine are not of the growth of our Country. Valour they allow us; but what we gain by our Arms, we lose by the Weakness of our Heads: Our good Ale, and English Beef, they say, may make us Souldiers; but are no very good Friends to Speculation. But, says Rimer, were it proper here to handle this Argument, and to make Comparisons with our Neighbours, it might easily, by our Poetry, be evinc'd, that our Wit was never inferiour to theirs; though, perhaps, our Honesty made us worse Politicians. Wit and Valour have always gone together, and Poetry has been the Companion of Camps. The Heroe and Poet were inspir'd with the same Enthusiasm, acted with the same heat, and Both were crown'd with the same Laurel. Had our Tongue, says Rimer, been as generally known, and those who felt our blows, understood our Language;

M

guage; they would confess, that our *Poets* had likewise done their part, and that our *Pens* had been as successful as our *Swords*. And certainly, if *Sir Philip Sidney* had seen the *Poets*, who succeeded him, he would not have judg'd the *English* less deserving than their Neighbours. *Rimer* in the Pref. to his *Translat. of Rapin*.

*Above our Neighbours our Conceptions are,  
But faultless Writing is th' Effect of Care.  
Our Lines reform'd, and not compos'd in haste;  
Polisht like Marble, wou'd like Marble last.  
But as the present, so the last Age writ;  
In both we find like Negligence and Wit.  
Were we but less indulgent to our Faults,  
And Patience had to cultivate our Thoughts;  
Our Muse would flourish, and a Nobler Rage  
Would honour this, than did the Grecian Stage.*

*Edm. Waller's* Prologue to the *Maids Tragedy*.

*Rimer* says, That he presumes *Rapin* did not understand our Language well enough, to pass a Judgment on the *English Poets*: only in general he confesses, that we have a *Genius* for *Tragedy* above all other People; One reason he gives, we cannot allow of, viz. *The disposition of our Nation, which, he saith, is delighted with cruel things*. 'Tis ordinary, says *Rimer*, to judge of Peoples Manners and Inclinations, by their publick Diversions; and therefore Travellers, who see some of our *Tragedies*, may indeed conclude us the cruellest minded People in *Christendom*.

In another place *Rapin* says of us, That we are Men in an Island, divided from the rest of the World, and that

that we love Blood in our Sports. And, perhaps, says Rimer, it may be true, that on *our* Stage are more Murders, than on *all* the Theatres in *Europe*. And they who have not time to learn our Language, or be acquainted with our Conversation, may there in three hours time behold so much Bloodshed, as may affright them from the *inhospitable Shore*, as from the *Cyclops Den*. Let our *Tragedy-Makers* then consider this, and examine whether it be the Disposition of the People, or their own *Caprice*, that brings this Censure on the best natur'd Nation under the Sun. *Rimer's Pref. to the Translat. of Rabin.*

*Dryden* tells us, He cannot grant, that the *French Dramatick Writers* excel the *English*. Our Authors, says he, as far surpass them in Genius, as our Souldiers excel theirs in Courage: 'Tis true, in Conduct they surpass us either way: Yet that proceeds not so much from their greater Knowledge, as from the difference of Tasts in the two Nations. *They* content themselves with a thin Design, without Episodes, and manag'd by few Persons. Our Audience will not be pleas'd, but with variety of Accidents, an Underplot, and many Actors. *They* follow the *Ancients* too servilely, in the Mechanick Rules, and we assume too much Licence to our selves, in keeping them only in view, at too great a distance. But, says *Dryden*, if our Audience had their Tasts, our Poets could more easily comply with them, than the *French Writers* cou'd come up to the Sublimity of our Thoughts, or to the difficult variety of our Designs. *Dryd.* in his Dedic. before the *Exammen Poëticum*.

*But who did ever in French Authors see  
The Comprehensive English Energy?*

*The weighty Bullion of one Sterling Line,  
 Drawn to French Wire, would through whole Pages shine.  
 I speak my private, but impartial Sense,  
 With Freedom, and (I hope) without Offence :  
 For I'll Recant, when France can shew me Wit,  
 As strong as ours, and as succinctly writ.*  
**Roscommon's** Essay on Translated Verse.

Sir William Temple remarks, That among the many Decays of Poetry, there is yet one sort, that seems to have succeeded much better with our Moderns, than any of the rest, which is *Dramatick*, or that of the Stage: In this the *Italian*, the *Spanish*, and the *French*, have all had their different Merit, and received their just Applauses. Yet I am deceiv'd, says Temple, if our *English* has not in some kind excell'd both the *Modern* and the *Ancient*; which has been by force of a *Vein* Natural perhaps to our Countrey, and which with us, is called *Humour*; a Word peculiar to our Language, and hard to be express'd in any other; nor is it (that I know of) found in any Forreign Writers, unless it be *Moliere*, and yet *his* has too much of the *Farce*, to pass for the same with *ours*. *Shakespear* was the first that open'd this *Vein* upon our Stage, which has run so freely and so pleasantly ever since, that, says Temple, I have often wonder'd, to find it appear so little upon any other; being a Subject so proper for them, since *Humour* is but a Picture of particular Life, as *Comedy* is of general; and though it represents Dispositions and Customs less Common, yet they are not less Natural than those that are more frequent among Men; for if *Humour* it self be forc'd, it loses all the Grace; which has been indeed the fault of some of our Poets most celebrated in this Kind.

It may seem a Defect (says *Temple*) in the *Ancient Stage*, that the *Characters* introduc'd were so few, and those so common, as a Covetous old Man, an Amorous young Man, a Witty Wench, a Crafty Slave, a Bragging Souldier: The Spectators met nothing upon the Stage, but what they met in the Streets, and at every Turn. All the *Variety* is drawn only from different and uncommon Events; whereas if the *Characters* are so too, the Diversity and the Pleasure must needs be the more. But as of most general Customs in a Country, there is usually some Ground, from the Nature of the People or the Clymat, so there may be amongst us, for this *Vein* of our Stage, and a greater *Variety* of *Humour* in the *Picture*, because there is a greater *Variety* in the *Life*. This may proceed (says *Temple*) from the Native Plenty of our Soil, the unequalness of our Clymat, as well as the ease of our Government, and the Liberty of Professing Opinions and Factions, which perhaps our Neighbours may have about them, but are forced to disguise, and thereby they may come in time to be extinguish'd. Plenty begets Wantonness and Pride, Wantonness is apt to *Invent*, and Pride scorns to *Imitate*; Liberty begets Stomach or Heart, and Stomach will not be constrained. Thus we come to have more *Originals*, and more that appear what they are, we have more *Humour*, because every Man follows his own, and takes a Pleasure, perhaps a Pride, to shew it. On the contrary, where the People are generally Poor, and forced to hard Labour, their Actions and Lives are all of a piece; where they serve hard Masters, they must follow his Examples as well as Commands, and are forced upon Imitation in small Matters, as well as Obedience in great: So that some Nations look as if they were cast all by one Mould,

or

or cut out all by one Pattern, (at least the Common People in one, and the Gentlemen in another): They seem all of a sort in their Habits, their Customs, and even their Talk and Conversation, as well as in the Application and Pursuit of their Actions and their Lives.

Besides all this, there is another sort of *Variety* amongst us, which arises from our *Clymat*, and the Dispositions it naturally produces. We are not only more unlike one another, than any Nation I know, says Sir *William Temple*, but we are more unlike our selves too, at several times, and owe to our very Air some ill Qualities, as well as many good: We may allow some Distempers incident to our *Clymat*, since so much Health, Vigour, and length of Life have been generally ascribed to it; for among the *Greek* and *Roman* Authors themselves, we shall find the *Britains* observ'd, to live the longest, and the *Ægyptians* the shortest, of any Nations that were known in those Ages. Besides, I think, says *Temple*, none will dispute the Native Courage of our Men, and Beauty of our Women, which may be elsewhere as great in *Particulars*, but no where so in *General*; they may be (what is said of Diseases) as *Acute* in other places, but with us they are *Epidemical*. For my own part, says Sir *William Temple*, I have conversed much with Men of other Nations, and such as have been both in great Employments and Esteem, and I can say very impartially, that I have not observ'd among any, so much true *Genius* as among the *English*; no where more Sharpness of Wit, more Pleasantness of *Humour*, more Range of Fancy, more Penetration of Thought or Depth of Reflexion among the better Sort: No where more Goodness of Nature and of Meaning, nor more Plainness of Sense and of Life, than among  
the



the common sort of Country People, nor more blunt Courage and Honesty, than among our Sea-Men. But with all this, our Country must be confest, to be what a great Foreign Physician call'd it, *The Region of Spleen*, which may arise a good deal from the great Uncertainty, and many suddain Changes of our Weather in all Seasons of the Year: And how much these affect the Heads and Hearts, especially of the finest Tempers, is hard to be believ'd by Men, whose Thoughts are not turned to such Speculations. This (says *Temple*) makes us unequal in our *Humours*, inconstant in our Passions, uncertain in our Ends, and even in our Desires. But what effect soever such a Composition may have upon our Lives or our Government, it must needs have a good one upon our *Stage*, and has given admirable Play to our *Comical Wits*. So that, in my Opinion, says *Temple*, there is no *Vein* of that sort, either *Ancient* or *Modern*, which excels or equals the *Humour* of our Plays. *Sir Will. Temple's Essay of Poetry*, pag. 53, 54, &c.

That the *English Drama* is of late very much improved, appears by these following Lines;

*At first the Musick of our Stage was rude,  
Whilst in the Cock-Pit and Black-Friers it stood:  
And this might please enough in former Reigns,  
A thrifty, thin, and bashful Audience:  
When Bussy' d'Ambois and his Fustian took,  
And Men were ravish'd with Queen Gordobuc.  
But since our Monarch, by kind Heaven sent,  
Brought back the Arts with him from Banishment,  
And by his gentle Influence gave increase  
To all the harmless Luxuries of Peace:*

*Favour'd by him, our Stage has flourish'd too,  
 And every day in outward Splendor grew:  
 In Musick, Song, and Dance of every kind,  
 And all the Grace of Action 'tis refin'd;  
 And since that Opera's at length came in,  
 Our Players have so well improv'd the Scene  
 With Gallantry of Habit, and Machine,  
 As makes our Theatre in Glory vie  
 With the best Ages of Antiquity:  
 And mighty Roscius, were he living now,  
 Would envy both our Stage, and Acting too.*

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**Oldham**, in Imitat. of Horace's Art of Poetry,  
 pag. 18, 19.

*They who have best succeeded on the Stage,  
 Have still conform'd their Genius to their Age.  
 Thus Johnson did Mechanick Humour show,  
 When Men were dull, and Conversation low.  
 Then, Comedy was faultless, but 'twas course:  
 Cobb's Tankard was a Jest, and Otter's Horse.  
 And as their Comedy, their Love was mean:  
 Except, by chance, in some one labour'd Scene,  
 Which must atone for an ill-written Play.  
 They rose; but at their height could seldom stay.  
 Fame then was cheap, and the first Comer sped;  
 And they have kept it since, by being dead.  
 But were they now to write when Criticks weigh  
 Each Line, and ev'ry Word, throughout a Play,  
 None of 'em, no not Johnson, in his height  
 Could pass, without allowing Grains for weight.  
 Think it not envy that these Truths are told,  
 Our Poet's not malicious, though he's bold.  
 'Tis not to brand 'em, that their Faults are shown,  
 But, by their Errors, to excuse his own.*

If

*If Love and Honour now are higher rais'd,  
 'Tis not the Poet, but the Age is prais'd.  
 Wit's now arriv'd to a more high degree;  
 Our native Language more refin'd and free.  
 Our Ladies and our Men now speak more Wit  
 In Conversation, than those Poets writ.*

**Dryd.** Epilogue to the 2d Part of *Granada*.

*Dryden* tells us, That *Johnson*, *Fletcher*, and *Shakespeare*, are honour'd, and almost ador'd by us, as they deserve; Neither do I know (*says he*) any so presumptuous of themselves as to contend with them; Yet give me leave to say thus much, without Injury to their Ashes, that not only *we* shall never equal *them*; but *they* could never equal *themselves*, were they to rise and write again. We acknowledge them our Fathers in Wit, says *Dryden*, but they have ruin'd their Estates themselves before they came to their Childrens Hands. There is scarce an Humour, a Character, or any kind of Plot, which they have not us'd. All comes sullied or wasted to us: and were *they* to entertain this Age, they could not now make so plenteous Treatments out of such decay'd Fortunes. This therefore will be a good Argument to us, either not to write at all, or to attempt some other way. There is no *Bays* (*says Dryden*) to be expected in their Walks; *Tentanda via est quàm me quoque possum tollere humo.*

This way of Writing in *Verse*, says *Dryden*, they have only left free to us; our Age is arriv'd to a perfection in it, which *they* never knew; and which (if we may guess by what of theirs we have seen in *Verse*; as the *Faithful Shepherdess*, and *Sad Shepherd*;) 'tis probable they never could have reach'd. For the *Genius* of every Age is different; and though *ours* ex-

cel in *this*, I deny not, says *Dryden*, but that to imitate Nature in that Perfection which they did in *Prose*, is a greater Commendation, than to write in *Verse* exactly. *Dryd. Essay of Dram. Poësie, pag. 45, 46.*

*Rimer* says, He fears what *Quintilian* pronounced concerning the *Roman Comedy*, may as justly be said of *English Tragedy*: *In Tragædiâ maximè claudicamus, vix levem consequimur Umbram*: In *Tragedy* we come short extremely. We have hardly any Shadow of it. *Rtmer's Short view of Tragedy, pag. 85.*

*Dr. Burnet*, the present Bishop of *Salisbury*, remarks, That the *English Language* has wrought it self out, both of the tulsome Pedantry, under which it labour'd long ago, and the trifling way of dark and unintelligible Wit, that came after *that*, and out of the course Extravagance of *Canting* that succeeded *this*: But as one Extream commonly produces another, so we were beginning to fly into a Sublime pitch, of a strong but false Rhetorick, which had much corrupted, not only the *Stage*, but even the *Pulpit*; two places, that though they ought not to be named together, much less to resemble one another; yet (says *Burnet*) it cannot be denied, but the Rule and Measure of Speech is generally taken from them: but that florid Strain is almost quite worn out, and is become *now* as ridiculous as it was once admired. So that without either the Expence or Labour that the *French* have undergone, our *Language* has, like a rich Wine, wrought out its *Tartar*, and is insensibly brought to a Purity that could not have been compassed without much Labour; had it not been for the great advantage we have of a *Prince* [*Charles the 2d.*] who is so great a Judge, that his single approbation or dislike, says *Burnet*, has almost as great an Authority over our *Language*, as his Prerogative gives him over  
our

our *Coin*. We are now so much refin'd, that how defective soever our Imaginations or Reasonings may be, yet our *Language*, says *Burnet*, has fewer faults, and is more natural and proper, than it was ever at any time before. When one compares the best Writers of the *last Age*, with those that excel in *this*, the difference is very discernable: even the great Sir *Francis Bacon*, that was the first that writ our *Language* correctly, as he is still our best Author, yet in some places has Figures so strong, that they could not pass now before a severe Judge. I will not (says *Burnet*) provoke the present Masters of the Stage, by preferring the Authors of the last Age to them: for though they all acknowledge that *they* come far short of *Ben. Johnson*, *Beaumont*, and *Fletcher*, yet I believe they are better pleas'd to say this *themselves*, than to have it observ'd by *others*. Their *Language* is now certainly properer, and more natural than it was formerly, chiefly since the Correction that was given by the *Rehearsal*, writ by the late Duke of *Buckingham*; And it is to be hoped, says *Burnet*, that the *Essay on Poetry*, [writ by the *Earl of Mulgrave*,] which may be well matched with the best Pieces of its kind that even *Augustus's* Age produced, will have a more powerful Operation, if clear Sense, joyned with home but gentle Reproofs, can work more on our Writers, than that unmerciful exposing them has done. *Gilb. Burnet's Pref. to his Translat. of Sir Tho. More's Utopia.*

I am sorry, says *Dryden*, that (speaking so Noble a *Language* as we do) we have not a more certain Measure of it, as they have in *France*, where they have an *Academy* erected for that purpose, and indow'd with large Priviledges by the present King. I wish, says *Dryden*, we might at length leave to borrow words from

ther Nations, which is now a *Wantonness* in us, not a *Necessity*; but so long as *some* affect to speak them; there will not want *others*, who will have the boldness to write them. *Dryd.* Dedic. to the E. of Orrery before the Rival-Ladies.

It would mortifie an *English* Man, to consider, that from the time of *Boccace*, and of *Petrarch*, the *Italian Language* has varied very little: And that the *English* of *Chaucer* their Contemporary, is not to be understood without the help of an old *Dictionary*. But their *Goth* and *Vandal* had the Fortune to be grafted on a *Roman* Stock: Ours has the disadvantage to be founded on the *Dutch*. We are full of *Monosyllables*, and those clog'd with *Consonants*; and our *Pronunciation* is *effeminate*. All which are Enemies to a sounding *Language*. 'Tis true, that to supply our Poverty, we have traffick'd with our Neighbour Nations; by which means we abound as much in *Words*, as *Amsterdam* does in *Religions*; but to order them, and make them useful after their admission is the difficulty. A greater Progress has been made in this, since his Majesty's *Return*, than perhaps since the *Conquest* to *his* time. But the better part of the Work remains unfinish'd: And that which has been done already, since it has only been in the Practice of some few Writers, must be digested into Rules and Method; before it can be profitable to the General. *Dryd.* Dedic. to the E. of Sunderland before *Troilus and Cressida*.

Our *Language* is both Copious, Significant, and Majestical; and might be reduc'd into a more harmonious Sound. But for want of Publick Encouragement, in this *Iron Age*, we are so far from making any Progress in the improvement of our Tongue, that in few years,  
we

we shall speak and write as Barbarously as our Neighbours. *Dryd.* Dedic. to the Lord Radcliffe, before Examen Poëticum.

*Rapin* says, That the *English Language* is proper for great Expressions. *Reflex. on Aristot. Part 2. Sect. 23.*

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## Concerning the Italian and Spanish Poetry; and their Languages in relation to Poetry.

**R** *Imer* tells us, That in the beginning of the last Century, when People began to open their Eyes, and look farther into the Matters of Religion and good Literature, *Italy* had much the start and advantage of the rest of *Europe*; thither were *Aristotle's* Works first brought a-shore; and there were they Translated, Conn'd, and Commented by the chiefest Wits amongst them. And above all, his *Poetica* engag'd their utmost care and application.

So many Comments had they made, and so many Critical Observations, before, on this side the *Alps*, any thing in that way was understood, that they began to lay it down for a truth, That the *Tramontans* had no *Gusto*. *Oltramontani*, says one of them, *non sono Zelanti delle buone Regole de Greci, & de Latini.* They make no Conscience of breaking the good Laws of the Greeks and Latins.

Others undertook to put in Practice, and write by his Principles and Direction. *Bibiena* (afterwards a Cardinal)

Cardinal) first try'd his Talent on a *Comedy*; and was follow'd by *Ariosto*, *Piccolomini*, *Machiavel*, and many others, who took *Plautus* and *Terence* for their Patterns.

*Trissino*, *Ruscalli*, *Cinthio*, *Tasso*, with many more, wrote *Tragedies* in Blank Verse, with the *Chorus*; and every thing to the best of their power, after the *Athenian* Models.

But *Italy*, says *Rimer*, had no *Fund* for the vast Charge of *Dramatick* Representations; they had no standing Revenue for the *Theatre*; and however Magnificent some Prince might be on an extraordinary Wedding, or great Occasion; there was nothing constant, nor could it, in such Circumstances, be expected, that the *Drama* there should turn to account, or rise to any tolerable Reputation. Therefore the ordinary Business of the Stage was left amongst a Company of *Strolers*, who wandred up and down, acting *Farce*, or turning into *Farce*, whatever they acted. *Castelvetro* tells us, That even at *Rome*, in his time, *Christ's Passion* was so acted by them, as to set all the Audience a laughing. *Rimer's Short view of Tragedy, Chap. v.*

From *Spain* little observable can be expected in relation to *Dramatick Poetry*; since *Campanella* had assur'd them, That it is *The Nurse of Heresie*.

So Father *Guzman* informs us, That his *Catholick Majesty*, *Philip II.* towards the end of his Life, (when his Wisdom was *en su punto*, on the point of Perfection) did quite banish it the Country.

We are also told by another *Jesuite*, how Religiously the truly *Catholick*, *Phil. IV.* in the Year 1646. packt it away, as the Common Plague, from out the Kingdoms of *Spain*, by his Royal Edict.



So we see this *Nurse of Heresie*, this *Head of the Panga Hydra*, is like to have no footing within the *Catholick Majesties Dominions*. The *Inquisition* and the *Muses* must not set their *Horses* together. **Rimer**, *Ibidem*.

*Rapin* informs us, That the *Italian* and *Spanish Poets*, have scarce ever yet subjected their *Wit* to *Rules of Art*. Into what *Enormities* hath *Petrarch* run in his *Africa*; *Ariosto* in his *Orlando Furioso*; *Cavalier Marino* in his *Adonis*, and all the other *Italians*, who were ignorant of *Aristotle's Rules*; and followed no other *Guides* but their own *Genius*, and *Capricious Fancy*: Truth is, says *Rapin*, the *Wits of Italy* were so prepossess'd in favour of the *Romantick Poetry* of *Pulci*, *Boyardo*, and *Ariosto*, that they regarded no other *Rules*, than what the heat of their *Genius* inspir'd. **Rap.** *Reflex. on Aristot. of Poesie, Part 2. Sect. 17. and 11.*

*Rapin* in another place, speaking of the *Italian* and *Spanish Poets*, says, 'Tis too great *Honour* to call them *Poets*, they being for the most part but *Rimesters*. **Rap.** *Ibid. Sect. 23.*

*Rimer* says, That the *Italian Language* is fittest for *Burlesque*, and better becomes the *Mouth of Petrolin* and *Arloquin* in their *Farces*, than any *Heroick Character*. The perpetual *Termination in Vowels* is *Childish*, and themselves confess, rather *sweet* than *grave*.

The *Diffyllable Rhimes*, says *Rimer*, force the *Italians* and *Spaniards* on the *Stanza in Heroicks*; which besides many other *disadvantages*, renders the *Language* unfit for *Tragedy*. **Rimer's Pref. before his Translat. of Rapin.**

*Dryden* tells us, That 'tis almost needless to speak any thing of that *Noble Language*, the *Italian*: All, says he, who are conversant in the *Italian*, cannot but observe

observe, That it is the softest, the sweetest, the most harmonious, not only of any Modern Tongue, but even beyond any of the Learned. It seems indeed to have been invented for the sake of *Poetry* and *Musick*; the *Vowels* are so abounding in all Words, especially in the Terminations of them, that excepting some few *Monosyllables*, the whole *Language* ends in them. Then the Pronunciation is so Manly, and so sonorous, that their very *speaking* has more of *Musick* in it, than *Dutch Poetry*, and *Song*. It has withal deriv'd so much Copiousness and Eloquence from the *Greek* and *Latin*, in the Composition of Words, and the Formation of them, that (if after all we must call it *Barbarous*) 'tis the most Beautiful and most Learned of any *Barbarism* in Modern Tongues. And we may, at least, as justly praise it, as *Pyrrhus* did the *Roman Discipline* and *Martial Order*, That it was of *Barbarians*, (for so the *Greeks* call'd all other Nations,) but had nothing in it of *Barbarity*. This *Language* has in a manner been refin'd and purify'd from the *Gothick*, ever since the time of *Dante*; which is above four Hundred years ago; and the *French*, who now cast a longing Eye to their Country, are not less ambitious to possess their Elegance in *Poetry* and *Musick*; in both which they labour at Impossibilities. *Dryd.* Pref. to *Albion and Albanus*.

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Concerning the French Poetry; and  
their Language in relation to Poe-  
try.

**F***Francis* the First, by whose encouragement Letters had begun to flourish in *France*, and Poetry more particularly by the means of *Clement Marot*, (who then translated the *Psalms*, and sent abroad his *Balades*, which *Campanella* reckons to have usher'd in the *Heresie*.) this King *Francis*, says *Rimer*, was much delighted, for want of better, with a Company of *Strolers*, who wandred up and down, acting *Farce*, or turning into *Farce*, whatever they Acted. At the latter end of his Reign we find a *Cause* of the *Strolers* notably pleaded and debated amongst their Lawyers and the King's Counsel—King *Francis* liv'd about five or six Years after. And then were the *Comedians* both *French* and *Italians*, all pack'd off, and banished the Kingdom.

In 1597. *Peter l'Ariveu* published *Comedies* written, as he tells us, in imitation of the Ancient *Greeks*, *Latins*, and Modern *Italians*.

And the End he propos'd was according to *Horace*,

*Quelque profit, & Contentement ensemble.*

After him *Alexander Hardy* attempted *Tragedy*, whose Works were publish'd Ann. 1625. Not long after succeeded the famous *Corneille*, who began to write for the Stage, after *Hardy's* Model.

And now, says *Rimer*, if the *French Theatre* did not rise to equal the Glory of the *Romans*, and Ancient *Greeks*, it was not for want of Encouragement from the Government. Cardinal *Richelieu*, who had the power in his hand, did heartily and generously perform his part. He founded the *Academy Royal*, and more especially provided for the Theatre. Yet with this Caution, never to represent *Aucunes Actions Malhonestes, ny d'user d'aucunes paroles lascives, ny à double entente, qui puissent blesser l'honnesteté publique.* And we find the *Poets* stand corrected, and do penance, if they chance to offend against this Declaration.

*Rimer* says, That in points of Decency the *French* are certainly very delicate, and commendable. The noble Encouragement they met withal, and their singular application have carried them very far in the improvement of the *Drama*. Nor were the Audience to be taxed for the hasty applause, they have often given to *Plays* of no great Merit. It has been so in all Nations, says *Rimer*. As, in *Pictures*, A Man who had never seen such a thing before, wou'd find his amusement, and be in admiration at every *Sign-post*, or *Saracen's Head* that he travels by. The first *Plays* of *Corneille* were better, that is, more regular, than any before him; the Audience had never seen the like. They now see the difference betwixt his first *Essays*, and the *Plays* composed in his riper Years.

After all, says *Rimer*, it is observ'd, how much that wild-geese-chase of *Romance* runs still in their head; some Scenes of *Love* must every where be shuffled in, tho' never so unseasonable. The *Grecians* were for *Love* and *Musick* as mad as any *Monsieur* of 'em all; yet their *Musick* kept within Bounds; attempted no *Metamorphosis* to turn the *Drama* to an *Opera*. Nor did their  
*Love*

Love come whining on the Stage, to Effeminate the Majesty of their Tragedy. It was not any love for *Briseis* that made *Achilles* so wroth; it was the affront, in taking his booty from him, in the face of the Confederate Army. This, his Stomach cou'd not digest.

— — — — — *nec gravem*  
*Peleidæ Stomachum cedere nesciit.* Horat.

One, with the Genius of *Miguel Cervante*, might, doubtless, find matter for as good a *Satyr*, from the *French Gallantry*, says *Rimer*, as *He* had done from the *Spanish Chivalry*. *Ritmer's* short view of *Tragedy*, *chapt. v.*

*Dryden* observes to us, That the Excellency of *French Poetry* does consist in the nicety of *Manners*: Their *Heroes* are the most civil People breathing; but their good Breeding seldom extends to a word of Sense: All their Wit is in their Ceremony: They want the Genius which animates our Stage; and therefore 'tis but necessary when they cannot please, that they should take care not to offend. But, as the Civilest Man in the Company is commonly the dullest, so these Authors, while they are afraid to make you laugh or cry, out of pure good manners, make you sleep. They are so careful not to exasperate a *Critique*, that they never leave him any Work; so busie with the Broom, and make so clean a riddance, that there is little left either for *Censure* or for *Praise*: For no part of a *Poem* is worth our discommending, where the whole is insipid; as when we have once tasted of pall'd Wine, we stay not to examine it Glass by Glass. But while they affect to shine in trifles, they are often careless in

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Essentials.

Essentials. *Dryd.* Pref. to *All for Love*; or, *The World well lost*.

The present *French Poets* are generally accus'd, That wheresoever they lay the Scene, or in whatsoever Age, the manners of their *Heroes* are wholly *French*: *Racin's Bajazet*, is bred at *Constantinople*; but his Civilities are convey'd to him by some secret passage, from *Versailles* into the *Seraglio*. *Dryd.* Pref. to *Troilus and Cressida*.

*Rapin* tells us, That *Judgement* is not the Ordinary Talent of the *French*; 'tis generally in the Contrivance of their Design, that their *Poets* are defective; and nothing is more rare among them, than a Design that is great, just, and well conceiv'd. They pretend to be more happy in the Talents of *Wit* and *Fancy*. *Rap.* part 1. sect. 19. on *Arist. Treat. of Poësie*.

We may (says *Rapin*) flatter our selves with our *Wit*, and the *Genius* of our Nation; but our Soul is not enough exalted to frame great *Idea's*; we are busied with petty Subjects, and by that means it is, that we prove so cold in the great; and that in our Works scarce appears any Shadow of that *Sublime Poësie*, of which the Ancient *Poets* have left such excellent Models, and above all *Homer* and *Virgil*; for great Poetry must be animated and sustain'd by great Thoughts, and great Sentiments; but these we ordinarily want, says *Rapin*; either because our *Wit* is too much limited, or because we take not care to exercise it on important Matters. *Rap. Ibid.* sect. 26.

The *Genius* of our Nation, says *Rapin*, is not strong enough, to sustain an Action on the Theatre by moving only *Terror* and *Pity*. These are *Machins* that will not play as they ought, but by great Thoughts, and noble Expressions, of which we are not indeed altogether so capable,

capable, as the *Greeks*. Perhaps, says *Rapin*, our Nation, which is naturally Gallant, has been oblig'd, by the necessity of our Character, to frame for our selves a new *System of Tragedy*, to suit with our Humour. *Rap. on Arist. Treatise of Poesie, part 2. sect. xx.*

Sir *William Temple* takes notice, That to supply the Defects of the *Modern Poetry*, much Application has been made to the smoothness of *Language or Stile*; which has at the best, but the Beauty of Colouring in a Picture, and can never make a good one, without Spirit and Strength. The *Academy* set up by Cardinal *Richelieu*, to amuse the Wits of that Age and Country, and divert them from rakeing into his Politicks and Ministry, brought *this* in Vogue; and the *French Wits* have for this last Age, been in a manner wholly turn'd to the Refinement of their *Language*, and indeed with such success, that it can hardly be excell'd, and runs equally through their *Verses* and their *Prose*. Sir *Will. Temple's Essay of Poetry, pag. 52, 53.*

*Dryden* says, 'tis true indeed, the *French* have reform'd their Tongue, and brought both their *Prose* and *Poetry* to a Standard; the sweetness, as well as the Purity is much improv'd, by throwing off the unnecessary *Consonants*, which made their Spelling tedious, and their Pronunciation harsh: But after all, as nothing can be improv'd beyond its own *Species*, or farther than its Original Nature will allow; as an ill Voice, tho' never so thoroughly instructed in the Rules of Musick, can never be brought to Sing Harmoniously, nor many an Honest Critick ever arrive to be a good Poet; so neither can the natural Harshness of the *French*, or their perpetual ill Accent, be ever refin'd into perfect Harmony like the *Italian*. *Dryd. Pref. to Albion and Albanus.*

The *French Language*, says *Rimer*, wants strength and Sinews, is too feeble for the Weight and Majesty of *Tragedy*. We see their *Consonants* spread on Paper, but they stick in the Hedge; they pass not their teeth in their Pronunciation.

The *French*, says *Rimer*, are not only fetter'd with *Ryme*, but their *Verse* is the long *Alexandrine*, of Twelve Syllables; with a stop, or pause always in the middle: Their own best Authors are sensible of this halt in their *Verse*, and complain of that *Cesure* and perpetual *Monotomy* as they call it. *Rimer's short view of Tragedy*, *chapt. v.*

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## Concerning Rhyme, and Blank Verse.

**D***Ryden* tells us, The advantages which *Rhyme* has over *Blank Verse*, are so many, that it were lost time to name them: *Sir Philip Sidney*, in his Defence of *Poesie*, gives us one, which, in my opinion, says *Dryden*, is not the least considerable; I mean, the help it brings to *Memory*; which *Rhyme* so knits up by the affinity of Sounds; that by remembering the last Words in one Line, we often call to mind both the Verses. Then in the quickness of *Reparties* (which in Discursive Scenes fall very often) it has so particular a Grace, and is so aptly suited to them, that the sudden smartness of the Answer, and the sweetness of the *Rhyme*, set off the Beauty of each other. But that benefit which



which I consider most in it, says *Dryden*, because I have not seldom found it, is, that it bounds and circumscribes the *Fancy*. For imagination in a *Poet* is a Faculty so wild and lawless, that, like an *high-ranging Spaniel*, it must have *Clogs* tied to it, lest it out-run the *Judgment*. The great easiness of *Blank Verse*, renders the *Poet* too luxuriant; he is tempted to say many things which might better be omitted, or at least shut up in fewer Words. But when the difficulty of Artful *Rhyming* is interpos'd, where the *Poet* commonly confines his Sense to his Couplet, and must contrive that Sense into such Words, that the *Rhyme* shall naturally follow *them*, not *they* the *Rhyme*; the *Fancy* then gives leisure to the *Judgment* to come in; which seeing so heavy a Tax impos'd, is ready to cut off all unnecessary Expences. This last Consideration has already answer'd an Objection which some have made; that *Rhyme* is only an Embroidery of Sense, to make that which is ordinary in it self, pass for Excellent, with less Examination. But certainly, that which most regulates the *Fancy*, and gives the *Judgment* its busiest Employment, is like to bring forth the richest and clearest Thoughts. The *Poet* examines that most which he produceth with the greatest leisure, and which he knows must pass the severest Test of the Audience, because they are aptest to have it ever in their Memory: As the Stomach makes the best Concoction, when it strictly embraces the Nourishment, and takes account of every little particle as it passes through. *Dryd.* Dedic. to the Earl of Orrery, before the Rival-Ladies.

*Shakespear* (who with some Errors not to be avoided in that Age, had, undoubtedly, a larger Soul of *Poesie* than ever any of our Nation) was the first, who, to shun the pains of continual *Rhyming*, invented that kind

of

of Writing, which we call *Blank Verse*, but the ~~French~~ more properly, *Prose Mesurée*; into which the *English Tongue* so naturally slides, that in Writing *Prose* 'tis hardly to be avoided. And therefore, I admire, says *Dryden*, that some Men should perpetually stumble in a way so easie. *Dryd. Ibid.*

Whether *Heroick Verse* ought to be admitted into serious Plays, is not now to be disputed: 'Tis already in possession of the Stage: And I dare confidently affirm, says *Dryden*, that very few *Tragedies*, in this Age, shall be receiv'd without it. All the Arguments which are form'd against it, can amount to no more than this, that it is not so near Conversation as *Prose*; and therefore not so natural. But it is very clear (says *Dryden*) to all who understand *Poetry*, that serious Plays ought not to imitate Conversation too nearly. If nothing were to be rais'd above that level, the foundation of *Poetry* would be destroy'd. And, if you once admit of a Latitude, that Thoughts may be exalted, and that Images and Actions may be rais'd above the Life, and describ'd in *Measure* without *Rhyme*, that leads you (says *Dryden*) insensibly from your own Principles to mine: You are already so far onward of your way, that you have forsaken the Imitation of ordinary Converse. You are gone beyond it; and, to continue where you are, is to lodge in the open field, betwixt two Inns. You have lost that which you call Natural, and have not acquir'd the last perfection of Art. But it was only *Custom* which cozen'd us so long: We thought, because *Shakespear* and *Fletcher* went no farther, that *there* the Pillars of *Poetry* were to be erected. That, because *they* excellently describ'd Passion without *Rhyme*, therefore *Rhyme* was not capable of describing it. But time has now convinc'd most Men of that Error. 'Tis indeed  
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so difficult to write *Verse*, that the Adversaries of it have a good Plea against many who undertake that Task, without being form'd by Art or Nature for it. Yet, even they (says *Dryden*) who have written worst in it, would have written worse *without* it. They have couzen'd many with their Sound, who never took the pains to examine their Sense. *In fine*, they have succeeded: Though 'tis true, they have more dishonour'd *Rhyme* by their good success, than they could have done by their ill. But I am willing, says *Dryden*, to let fall this Argument: 'Tis free for every Man to write, or not to write, in *Verse*, as he judges it to be, or not to be his Talent; or as he imagines the *Audience* will receive it. *Dryd.* *Essay of Heroick Plays*; before *Almanzor and Almahide*.

Mr. *Milton* labour'd all he could, to free us from the troublesome *Bondage of Rhyming*, as he calls it; and by his Incomparable Poems of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain'd*, has given us a most perfect Example of *Blank\*Verse*.

How the Noble, and Ingenious Lord *Roscommon*, stood affected to *Rhyme*, appears by these following Lines:

*Of many faults Rhyme is (perhaps) the Cause;  
Too strict to Rhyme we slight more useful Laws.  
For That, in Greece or Rome, was never known,  
Till by Barbarian Deluges o'reflown,  
Subdu'd, undone, They did at last Obey,  
And change their own for their Invaders way.  
I grant, that from some Mossie, Idol Oak  
In Double Rhymes our Thor and Woden spoke;*  
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*And by Succession of unlearned Times,  
As Bards began, so Munks rung on the Chimes.  
But now that Phæbus and the Sacred Nine,  
With all their Beams on our blest Islands shine,  
Why should not We their Ancient Rites restore,  
And be, what Rome or Athens were before?*

**Roscom.** *Essay on Translated Verse.*

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### Concerning Translations.

**M**R. James Howel remarks, That every Mans *Genius* is not cut out for a *Translator*, there being a kind of servility therein; For (*says he*) it must needs be somewhat tedious to one that hath any Free-born Thoughts within him, and genuine Conceptions of his own, to enchain himself to a *Verbal Servitude*, and the sense of another. Moreover, *Translations* are but as *turn-coated Things* at best; *says Howel*, especially among *Languages* that have advantages one of another, as the *Italian* hath of the *English*, which may be said to differ *one* from the *other* as *Silk* does from *Cloth*, the common wear of both Countries where they are spoken: And as *Cloth* is the more substantial, so the *English Tongue* by reason 'tis so knotted with *Consonants*, is the stronger, and the more sinewy of the two; But *Silk* is more smooth and slick, and so is the *Italian Tongue* compar'd to the *English*. Or else, *says Howel*, *Translations* are like the wrong side of a *Turky Carpet*, which uses to be full of Thrums and Knots, and no-  
thing

thing so even as the right side. Or, to conclude, *Translations* are like *Wines* taken off the Lees, and pour'd into other Vessels, that must needs lose somewhat of their first strength and briskness, which in the pouring, or passage rather evaporates into air.

Moreover touching *Translations*, says *Howel*, it is to be observ'd, That every *Language* hath certain *Idioms*, Proverbs and peculiar Expressions of *its own*; which are not rendible in any other but *Paraphrastically*; therefore he overacts the Office of an *Interpreter*, who doth enslave himself too strictly to Words or Phrases; I have heard (says *Howel*) of an *Excess* among *Limners*, call'd *too much to the Life*, which happens when one aims at *likeness* more than *skill*; So in Version of *Languages* one may be so over punctual in Words, that he may mar the matter; The greatest fidelity that can be expected in a *Translator*, is to keep still a foot, and entire, the true genuine Sense of the *Author*, with the main Design he drives at. *Howel's Famil. Lett. Vol. 3. Lett. 21.*

*Dr. Burnet*, the present Bishop of *Salisbury*, observes, That there is no way of Writing so proper, for the refining and polishing a *Language*, as the *Translating* of Books into it, if he that undertakes it, has a competent skill of the *one* Tongue, and is a Master of the *other*. When a Man writes his own Thoughts, the heat of his Fancy, and the quickness of his Mind, carry him so much after the Notions themselves, that for the most part he is too warm to judge of the aptness of Words, and the justness of Figures; so that he either neglects these too much, or over-does them: But when a Man *Translates*, he has none of these Heats about him: And therefore the *French* took no ill Method, when they intended to reform and beautifie their *Lan-*

guage, in setting their best Writers on Work to *Translate* the Greek and *Latin* Authors into it. There is so little praise got by *Translations*, that a Man cannot be engaged to it out of Vanity, for it has past for a sign of a slow Mind, that can amuse it self with so mean an Entertainment. But we begin to grow wiser, says *Burnet*, and tho' ordinary *Translators* must succeed ill in the esteem of the World, yet some have appear'd of late that will, I hope, bring that way of Writing in Credit. *Burnet's Pref. to his Translat. of Sir Tho. More's Utopia.*

'Tis true, Composing is the Nobler Part,  
 But good Translation is no easie Art :  
 For tho' Materials have long since been found,  
 Yet both your fancy, and your Hands are bound ;  
 And by Improving what was writ Before ;  
 Invention labours less, but Judgment, more.

*Roscom's Essay on Translated Verse.*

*Dryden* tells us, That a *Translator* is to make his Author appear as charming as possibly he can, provided he maintains his *Character*, and makes him not unlike himself. *Translation*, says *Dryden*, is a kind of Drawing after the Life ; where every one will acknowledge there is a double sort of *Likeness*, a good one and a bad. 'Tis one thing to draw the Out-lines true, the Features like, the Proportions exact, the Colouring it self perhaps tolerable ; and another thing to make all these graceful, by the posture, the shadowings, and chiefly by the Spirit which animates the whole. I cannot, says *Dryden*, without some indignation, look on an ill Copy of an Excellent Original. Much less can I behold

behold with patience *Virgil*, *Homer*, and some others, whose Beauties (says *Dryden*) I have been endeavouring all my Life to imitate, so abus'd, as I may say to their faces by a botching Interpreter. What *English* Readers unacquainted with *Greek* or *Latin* will believe Me or any other Man, when we commend those Authors, and confess we derive all that is pardonable in us from their Fountains, if they take those to be the same *Poets*, whom our *Ogleby's* have *Translated*? But I dare assure them, says *Dryden*, that a good *Poet* is no more like himself, in a dull *Translation*, than his Carcass would be to his living Body. There are many who understand *Greek* and *Latin*, and yet are ignorant of their Mother Tongue. The proprieties and delicacies of the *English* are known to few; 'tis impossible even for a good Wit, to understand and practice them without the help of a liberal Education, long Reading, and digesting of those few good Authors we have amongst us, the Knowledge of Men and Manners, the freedom of Habitudes, and Conversation with the best Company of both Sexes; and in short, without wearing off the rust which he contracted, while he was laying in a Stock of Learning. Thus difficult it is to understand the purity of *English*, and critically to discern not only good Writers from bad, and a proper stile from a Corrupt, but also to distinguish that which is pure in a good Author, from that which is Vicious and Corrupt in him. And for want of all these Requisites, or the greatest part of them, most of our Ingenious young Men, says *Dryden*, take some cry'd up *English* Poet for their Model, adore him, and imitate him as they think, without knowing wherein he is defective, where he is Boyish and trifling, wherein either his Thoughts  
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are improper to his Subject, or his Expressions unworthy of his Thoughts, or the Turn of both is unharmonious. Thus it appears necessary, that a Man shou'd be a nice Critick in his Mother Tongue, before he attempts to *Translate* a foreign Language. Neither is it sufficient that he be able to judge of Words and Stile; but he must be a Master of them too: He must perfectly understand his Authors Tongue, and absolutely command his own: So that to be a thorow *Translator*, he must be a thorow *Poet*. Neither is it enough to give his Authors Sense, in good *English*, in Poetical Expressions, and in Musical Numbers: For, tho' all these are exceeding difficult to perform, there yet remains an harder Task; and 'tis a secret of which few *Translators* have sufficiently thought. I have already hinted a Word or two concerning it; that is, the maintaining the *Character* of an Author, which distinguishes him from all others, and makes him appear that Individual Poet whom you wou'd Interpret. For example, not only the Thoughts, but the Style and Versification of *Virgil* and *Ovid*, are very different: Yet I see, says *Dryden*, even in our best *Poets*, who have *Translated* some parts of them, that they have confounded their several Talents; and by endeavouring only at the sweetness and harmony of *Numbers*, have made them both so much alike, that if I did not know the *Originals*, I shou'd never be able to judge by the *Copies*, which was *Virgil*, and which was *Ovid*. It was objected against a late noble Painter, that he drew many Graceful Pictures, but few of them were like. And this happen'd to him, because he always studied himself more than those who sate to him. In such *Translators*, says *Dryden*, I can easily distinguish the hand  
which



which perform'd the Work, but I cannot distinguish *their* Poet from *another*. Suppose two Authors are equally *sweet*, yet there is a great distinction to be made in *Sweetness*, as in that of *Sugar*, and that of *Honey*.  
**Dryd.** *Pref. to the 2d. Part of Poetic. Miscell.*

A *Translator* should not go so close, as to tread on the heels of his *Author*, and so hurt him by his too near approach. A noble *Author* wou'd not be persu'd too close by a *Translator*. We lose his *Spirit*, when we think to take his *Body*. The *grosser Part* remains with us, but the *Soul* is flown away, in some Noble Expression or some delicate turn of Words, or Thought.  
**Dryd.** *Dedic. before the Translat. of Juvenal, pag. 52.*

Sir John Denham says, There are so few *Translations* which deserve *praise*, that he scarce ever saw any which deserv'd pardon; those who travel in that kind, being for the most part so unhappy, as to rob others, without enriching themselves, pulling down the fame of good Authors, without raising their own: Neither hath any Author been more hardly dealt withal, than *Virgil*; and the reason is Evident; for, what is more excellent, is most inimitable, and if even the *Worst Authors* are yet made worse by their *Translators*, how impossible is it, not to do great injury to the *Best*?

I conceive it, says Denham, a vulgar Error in *Translating Poets*, to affect being *Fidus Interpres*; let that care be with them who deal in Matters of *Fact*, or Matters of *Faith*: But whosoever aims at it in *Poetry*, as he attempts what is not requir'd, so he shall never perform what he attempts; for it is not his business alone to *Translate Language* into *Language*, but *Poesie* into *Poesie*; and *Poesie* is of so subtil a Spirit,  
 that

that in pouring out of one *Language* into another, it will all evaporate; and if a new Spirit be not added in the transfusion, there will remain nothing but a *Caput Mortuum*, there being certain Graces and Hap-pineſſes peculiar to every *Language*, which gives Life and Energy to the Words; And whoſoever offers at *Verbal Tranſlations*, ſhall have the Miſfortune of that young *Traveller*, who loſt his own *Language* abroad, and brought home no other inſtead of it: For the Grace of the *Latin* will be loſt by being turned into *Engliſh* Words; and the Grace of the *Engliſh*, by being turn'd into the *Latin* Phraſe. And as *Speech* is the Apparel of our Thoughts, ſo are there certain Garbes and Modes of *Speaking*, which vary with the Times; the faſhion of our *Cloaths* being not more ſubject to alteration, than that of our *Speech*; And this I think *Tacitus* means, by that which he calls, *Sermonem temporis iſtius auribus accommodatum*; the delight of Change being as due to the curioſity of the *Ear*, as of the *Eye*. **Denham's** Pref. to *The Deſtruction of Troy*.

Dr. *Sprat* the preſent Biſhop of *Rocheſter*, tells us, That this way of leaving *Verbal Tranſlations*, and chiefly regarding the *Senſe* and *Genius* of the *Author*, was ſcarce heard of in *England* before this preſent Age. *He ſays*, that if Mr. *Cowley* was not the abſolute Inventor of it; yet he is ſure, he did conceive it, and diſcourſe of it, and practice it as ſoon as any Man. **Sprat's** Account of the *Life of Mr. Abraham Cowley*.

Concerning

## Concerning Criticks and Criticisms.

**R**imer tells us, That as the *Artist* would not take pains to polish a *Diamond*, if none besides himself were quick-sighted enough to discern the flaw; so *Poets* would grow negligent, if the *Criticks* had not a strict eye over their Miscarriages. Yet (says *Rimer*) it often happens, that this eye is so distorted by *envy* or *ill nature*, that it sees nothing aright. Some *Criticks* are like *Wasps*, that rather annoy the *Bees*, than terrifie the *Drones*.

For this sort of Learning, our Neighbour Nations have got far the start of us; in the last *Century*, *Italy* swarm'd with *Criticks*, where, amongst many of less note, *Castelvetro* opposed all *Comers*; and the famous Academy *La Crusca* was always impeaching some or other of the best Authors. *Spain*, in those days, bred great Wits, but I think (says *Rimer*,) was never so crowded, that they needed to fall out, and quarrel amongst themselves. But from *Italy*, *France* took the Cudgels; and tho' some light strokes passed in the days of *Marot*, *Baif*, &c. yet they fell not to it in earnest, nor was any noble Contest amongst them, till the *Royal Academy* was founded, and Cardinal *Richelieu* encourag'd and rallied all the scatter'd Wits under his Banner. Then *Malherb* reform'd their ancient licentious Poetry; and *Corneille's Cid* rais'd many Factions amongst them. At this time with us many great Wits flourish'd, but *Ben Johnson*, I think, says *Rimer*, had all the *Critical* Learning to himself; and till of late Years *England* was as free from *Criticks*, as it is now

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from *Wolves*, that a harmless well-meaning Book might pass without any danger. But now this privilege, whatever extraordinary Talent it requires, is usurped by the most ignorant: And they who are least acquainted with the Game, are aptest to bark at every thing that comes in their way. *Rimer's Pref. to Rapin's Reflex. on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie.*

The *Anonymous Translator* of *St. Evreumont's* mixt Essays, in his Preface, speaking of Epick Poems, observes, That the *Dutch* and *Germans* (as tho' frozen up) have produced little in this kind; yet (*says he*) we must confess that *Grotius*, *Heinsius*, *Scaliger*, and *Vossius* were Learned Criticks. Some of the *English* have indeed rais'd their Pens, and soar'd as high as any of the *Italians*, or *French*; yet Criticism came but very lately in fashion amongst us; without doubt *Ben. Johnson* had a large stock of Critical Learning; *Spencer* had studied *Homer*, and *Virgil*, and *Tasso*, yet he was mis-led, and debauch'd by *Ariosto*, as *Mr. Rimer* judiciously observes; *Davenant* gives some strokes of great Learning and Judgment, yet he is for unbeaten Tracks, new Ways, and undiscover'd Seas; *Cowley* was a great Master of the *Ancients*, and had the true *Genius* and Character of a *Poet*; yet this nicety and boldness of Criticism was a stranger all this time to our Climate; *Mr. Rimer*, and *Mr. Dryden* have begun to launch out into it, and indeed they have been very fortunate Adventurers. The *Earls of Roscommon* and *Mulgrave*, and *Mr. Waller* have given some fine touches; *Mr. Dryden's Criticks* are generally quaint and solid, his *Prefaces* (*says this Translator*) do as often correct and improve my Judgment, as his *Verses* do charm my Fancy; he is every where Sweet, Elegant, and Sublime; the *Poet* and *Critick* were seldom both so Conspicuous and

Illustrious

Illustrious in one Man as in *him*, except *Rapin*. Mr. *Rimer* in his incomparable Preface to *Rapin*, and in his *Reflexions* upon some late *Tragedies*, hath given sufficient Proofs, that he hath studied and understands *Aristotle* and *Horace*, *Homer* and *Virgil*, besides the *Wits* of all Countries and Ages; so that we may justly number *him* in the first Rank of *Criticks*, as having a most accomplish'd *Idea* of *Poetry*, and the *Stage*.

*Dryden* remarks, That we are fallen into an Age of Illiterate, Censorious, and Detracting People, who thus qualified set up for *Criticks*.

In the first place, says *Dryden*, I must take leave to tell them, that they wholly mistake the nature of *Criticism*, who think its business is principally to find fault. *Criticism*, as 'twas first instituted by *Aristotle*, was meant a Standard of judging well. The chiefest part of which, is, to observe those Excellencies, which should delight a *Reasonable Reader*. If the Design, the Conduct, the Thoughts, and the Expressions of a *Poem*, be generally such as proceed from a true *Genius* of *Poetry*; the *Critick* ought to pass his Judgment in favour of the Author. 'Tis malicious and unmanly to snarle at the little lapses of a Pen, from which *Virgil* himself stands not exempted. *Horace* acknowledges that honest *Homer* nods sometimes: He is not equally awake in every Line: But he leaves it also as a standing Measure for our Judgments,

—Non, ubi plura nitent in Carmine, paucis  
Offendi Maculis, quas aut incuria fudit  
Aut humana parum cavit Natura.—

And *Longinus*, who was undoubtedly, after *Aristotle*, the greatest *Critick* among the *Greeks*, in his twenty

seventh Chapter *περὶ ὑψῆς*, has (says Dryden) judiciously prefer'd the *Sublime Genius that sometimes errs*, to the *midling or indifferent one which makes few faults, but seldom or never rises to an Excellence*. He compares the first to a Man of large Possessions, who has not leisure to consider of every slight Expence, will not debase himself to the management of every Trifle: Particular Sums are not laid out, or spar'd to the greatest advantage in his Oeconomy: But are sometimes suffer'd to run to waste, while he is only careful of the Main. On the other side, he likens the *Mediocrity of Wit*, to one of a mean fortune, who manages his Store with extreme frugality, or rather parsimony: But who with fear of running into profuseness, never arrives to the Magnificence of Living. This kind of *Genius*, says Dryden, writes indeed correctly. A wary Man he is in Grammar; very nice as to *Solæcism* or *Barbarism*, judges to a hair of little decencies, knows better than any Man, what is not to be written; and never hazards himself so far as to fall: But plods on deliberately; and as a grave Man ought, is sure to put his Staff before him; in short, he sets his heart upon it; and with wonderful care makes his Business sure: That is, in plain *English*, neither to be blam'd, nor prais'd. I could, says *Longinus*, find out some Blemishes in *Homer*: And am perhaps, as naturally inclin'd to be disgusted at a fault as another Man: But, after all, to speak impartially, his failings are such, as are only Marks of Humane Frailty: They are little Mistakes, or rather Negligencies, which have escap'd his Pen in the fervour of his Writing; the Sublimity of his Spirit carries it with me against his Carelessness: And tho' *Apollonius's Argonautes*, and *Theocritus's Eidullia*, are more free from Errors, there is not any Man of so false a Judgment,

who

who would chuse rather to have been *Apollonius* or *Theocritus*, than *Homer*. *Dryd.* *Apology for Heroick Poetry; before The State of Innocence.*

Ill Writers, says *Dryden*, are usually the sharpest *Censors*: For *they* (as the best *Poet*, and the best *Patron* said,) when in the full perfection of decay, turn *Vinegar*, and come again in Play. Thus the Corruption of a *Poet*, is the Generation of a *Critick*: I mean, says *Dryden*, of a *Critick* in the general acceptation of this Age: For formerly they were quite another *Species* of Men. They were Defenders of *Poets*, and Commentators on their Works: To Illustrate obscure Beauties; to place *some* passages in a better Light, to redeem *Others* from Malicious Interpretations: To help out an Author's Modesty, who is not ostentatious of his Wit; and in short, to shield him from the ill Nature of those Fellows, who were *then* call'd *Zoili*, and *Momi*, and *now* take upon themselves the Venerable Name of *Censors*. But neither *Zoilus*, nor he who endeavour'd to defame *Virgil*, were ever Adopted into the Name of *Criticks* by the *Ancients*: What *their* Reputation was *then*, We know; and their *Successors* in *this* Age deserve no better. Are our Auxiliary Forces, says *Dryden*, turn'd our Enemies? Are they, who, at best, are but Wits of the Second Order, and whose only Credit amongst Readers, is what they obtain'd by being subservient to the Fame of Writers, are these become Rebels of Slaves, and Usurpers of Subjects; Or, to speak in the most Honourable Terms of them, are they (says *Dryden*) from our Seconds, become Principals against us? Does the *Ivy* undermine the *Oak*, which supports its weakness? What labour wou'd it cost them to put in a *better Line*, than the *Worst* of those, which they expunge in a *True Poet*? *Petronius*, the greatest Wit perhaps

perhaps of all the *Romans*, yet when his Envy prevail'd upon his Judgment, to fall on *Lucan*, he fell himself in his Attempt: *He* perform'd worse in his Essay of the *Civil War*, than the Author of the *Pharsalia*: And avoiding *his* Errors, has made greater of his own. *Julius Scaliger*, wou'd needs turn down *Homer*, and Abdicate him, after the possession of Three Thousand Years; Has he succeeded in his Attempt? He has indeed shown us some of those Imperfections in him, which are incident to Humane Kind: But who had not rather be that *Homer* than this *Scaliger*? You see the same *Hypercritick*, when he endeavours to mend the beginning of *Claudian*, (a faulty Poet, and living in a Barbarous Age;) yet how short he comes of him, and substitutes such Verses of his own, as deserve the *Ferrula*. What a Censure has he made of *Lucan*, that *he* rather seems to Bark, than Sing? Wou'd any but a Dog, have made so snarling a Comparison? One wou'd have thought, he had Learn'd *Latin*, as late as they tell us he did *Greek*: Yet he came off, with a *pace tuâ*, by your good leave, *Lucan*; he call'd him not by those outrageous Names, of *Fool*, *Booby*, and *Block-head*: He had somewhat more of good Manners, than his *Successors*, as he had much more Knowledge. *Dryd.* *Dedic. to the Lord Radcliffe, before The Examen Poeticum.*

*They who write ill, and they who ne're durst write,  
Turn Criticks, out of meer Revenge and Spight:  
A Play-House gives 'em Fame; and up there starts,  
From a mean Fifth-rate Wit, a Man of Parts.  
Our Author fears those Criticks as his Fate:  
And those he fears, by consequence, must Hate.*



*For they the Traffick of all Wit, invade ;  
As Scriv'ners draw away the Bankers Trade.*

**Dryd.** Prol. to the 2d. Part of the *Conquest of Granada.*

*Each puny Censor, who his skill to boast,  
Is cheaply Witty on the Poet's Cost.  
No Criticks Verdict, should, of right, stand good,  
They are excepted all as Men of Blood :  
And the same Law shall shield them from their Fury,  
Which has excluded Butchers from a Jury.  
You'd all be Wits—————*

*But Writing's tedious, and that way may fail ;  
The most Compendious Method is to rail.*

**Dryd.** Prol. to *Secret Love : Or, The Maiden Queen.*

*Half-Wits are Fleas ; so little and so light ;  
We scarce cou'd know they live, but that they bite.*

**Dryd.** Prol. to *All for Love.*

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Concerning

## Concerning Opera's.

AN *Opera* is a *Poetical Tale*, or *Fiction*, represented by *Vocal* and *Instrumental Musick*, adorn'd with *Scenes*, *Machines*, and *Dancing*. The suppos'd Persons of this *Musical Drama*, are generally supernatural, as *Gods*, and *Goddeses*, and *Heroes*, which at least are descended from them, and are in due time, to be adopted into their Number. The Subject therefore being extended beyond the Limits of *Humane Nature*, admits of that sort of Marvellous and Surprising Conduct, which is rejected in other *Plays*. *Humane Impossibilities* are to be receiv'd, as they are in *Faith*; because where *Gods* are introduc'd, a *Supreme Power* is to be understood, and *Second Causes* are out of doors: Yet *Propriety* is to be observ'd even here. The *Gods* are all to manage their peculiar Provinces; and what was attributed by the *Heathens* to one Power, ought not to be perform'd by any other. *Phœbus* must foretel, *Mercury* must charm with his *Caduceus*, and *Juno* must reconcile the Quarrels of the *Marriage-Bed*. To conclude, They must all act according to their distinct and peculiar Characters. If the Persons represented were to speak upon the Stage, it wou'd follow of necessity, That the Expressions should be Lofty, Figurative, and Majestical: But the Nature of an *Opera* denies the frequent use of those *Poetical Ornaments*: For *Vocal Musick*, tho' it often admits a loftiness of Sound; yet always exacts an harmonious

nious Sweetness : Or, to distinguish yet more justly, The Recitative Part of the *Opera* requires a more Masculine Beauty of Expression and Sound : The *Other*, which (for want of a proper *English* word) I must call *The Songish Part*, must abound in the softness and variety of *Numbers* ; its principal Intention, being to please the *Hearing*, rather than to gratifie the Understanding.

It appears indeed preposterous at first Sight, That *Rhime*, on any Consideration, should take place of *Reason*. But, in order to resolve the Probleme, this fundamental Proposition must be settled, That the first Inventors of any Art or Science, provided they have brought it to perfection, are, in reason, to give Laws to it ; and according to their Model, all after-Undertakers are to build. Thus in *Epick Poetry*, no Man ought to dispute the Authority of *Homer*, who gave the first Being to that Master-piece of Art, and endued it with that Form of Perfection in all its Parts, that nothing was wanting to its Excellency. *Virgil* therefore, and those very few who have succeeded him, endeavour'd not to introduce or innovate any thing in a Design already perfected, but imitated the *Plan* of the *Inventor* ; and are only so far true *Heroick Poets*, as they have built on the Foundations of *Homer*. Thus *Pindar*, the Author of those *Odes*, (which are so admirably restor'd by Mr. *Cowley* in our Language,) ought for ever to be the Standard of them ; and we are bound according to the practice of *Horace* and Mr. *Cowley*, to Copy him. Now, to apply this *Axiom* to our present purpose, whosoever undertakes the Writing of an *Opera*, (which is a Modern

R

Invention,

Invention, though built; indeed, on the Foundations of *Ethnick* Worship,) is oblig'd to imitate the Design of the *Italians*, who have not only invented, but brought to perfection, this sort of *Dramatick* Musical Entertainment. I have not been able, says *Dryden*, by any search, to get any Light either of the time, when it began, or of the first Author: But I have probable Reasons, which induce me to believe, that some *Italians*, having curiously observ'd the Gallantries of the *Spanish Moors* at their *Zambra's*, or Royal Feasts, where *Musick*, *Songs*, and *Dancing* were in perfection; together with their *Machines*, which are usual at their *Sortia's*, or running at the Ring, and other Solemnities, may possibly have refin'd upon those *Moresque* Divertisements, and produc'd this delightful Entertainment, by leaving out the Warlike Part of the *Carousels*, and forming a *Poetical* Design for the use of the *Machines*, the *Songs*, and *Dances*. But however it began, (for this is only Conjectural,) we know, says *Dryden*, that for some Centuries, the Knowledge of *Musick* has flourish'd principally in *Italy*, the Mother of Learning and of Arts; that *Poetry* and *Painting* have been *there* restor'd, and so cultivated by *Italian* Masters, that all *Europe* has been enrich'd out of their Treasury; and the other Parts of it, in relation to those delightful Arts, are still as much Provincial to *Italy*, as they were in the time of the *Roman* Empire. Their first *Opera's* seem to have been intended for the Celebration of the *Marriages* of their *Princes*, or for the Magnificence of some general time of Joy. Accordingly the Expences of them were from the Purse of the *Sovereign*, or of the  
the

the *Republick*, as they are still practis'd at *Venice*, *Rome*, and other Places at their Carnivals. *Savoy* and *Florence* have often us'd them in their Courts, at the *Weddings* of their *Dukes*: And at *Turin* particularly, was perform'd the *Pastor Fido*, written by the famous *Guarini*, which is a *Pastoral Opera* made to Solemnize the *Marriage* of a *Duke* of *Savoy*. The Prologue of it has given the Design to all the *French*; which is a *Complement* to the *Sovereign Power* by some *God* or *Goddeses*; so that it looks no less, than a kind of *Embassie* from *Heaven* to *Earth*. I said in the Beginning of this Discourse, says *Dryden*, that the Persons represented in *Opera's*, are generally *Gods*, *Goddeses*, and *Heroes* descended from them, who are suppos'd to be their peculiar Care; which hinders not, but that meaner Persons may sometimes gracefully be introduc'd, especially if they have relation to those first Times, which *Poets* call the *Golden Age*: Wherein by reason of their Innocence, those happy *Mortals* were suppos'd to have had a more familiar Intercourse with *Superiour Beings*; and therefore *Shepherds* might reasonably be admitted, as of all *Callings*, the most innocent, the most happy, and who, by reason of the spare Time they had, in their almost idle Employment, had most leisure to make *Verses*, and to be in *Love*; without somewhat of which *Passion*, no *Opera* can possibly subsist.——

*Thought* and *Elevation* of *Fancy*, says *Dryden*, are not of the nature of this sort of *Writing*: The necessity of double *Rhimes*, and ordering of the *Words* and *Numbers* for the sweetness of the *Voice*, are the main Hinges on which an *Opera* must move. *Dryd.*  
*Pref. to Albion and Albanus.*

Dryden, in the *Post-script* to the aforesaid *Preface*, says, That possibly the *Italians* went not so far as *Spain*, for the Invention of their *Opera's*. They might have it in their own Country; and that by gathering up the Shipwrecks of the *Athenian* and *Roman* Theaters; which we know were adorn'd with *Scenes*, *Musick*, *Dances*, and *Machines*, especially the *Grecian*.

The Author of *The Gentleman's Journal* informs us, That other Nations bestow the Name of *Opera* only on such *Plays* whereof every Word is *Sung*. But experience (*says he*) has taught us, That our *English* Genius will not relish that perpetual *Singing*. He tells us, he dares not accuse the *Language* for being over-charg'd with *Consonants*, which may take off the beauties of the *Recitative* Part, though in several other Countries he has seen their *Opera's* still crowded every time, tho' long, and almost all *Recitative*. It is true, that their *Trio's*, *Chorus's*, lively *Songs* and *Recits* with *Accompaniments* of Instruments, *Symphonies*, *Machines*, and Excellent *Dances* make the rest be born with, and the one sets off the other: But our *English* Gentlemen, when their *Ear* is satisfy'd, are desirous to have their *Mind* pleas'd, and *Musick* and *Dancing* industriously intermix'd with *Comedy* or *Tragedy*: I have often observ'd, says this Author, That the Audience is no less attentive to some extraordinary *Scenes* of *Passion* or *Mirth*, than to what they call *Beaux Endroits*, or the most ravishing part of the *Musical Performance*: But had those *Scenes*, tho' never so well wrought up, been *Sung*, they would have lost most of their Beauty. All this

this however doth not lessen the power of *Musick*, for its Charms command our Attention, when us'd in their place, and the admirable *Consorts* we have in *Charles-Street* and *York-Buildings*, are an undeniable proof of it. But this (says our *Author*) shows that what is unnatural, as are *Plays* altogether *Sung*, will soon make one uneasy, which *Comedy* or *Tragedy* can never do, unless they be bad. These *Opera's* or *Plays* in *Musick* have been us'd for above a *Century* amongst the *Italians*; most *Cities* in *Italy* have their *Opera's*, as also *Sicily* and *Savoy*. But *Venice* is the place where they are Triumphant. They have there most *Carnivals*, Nine or Ten *Opera's* on seven several *Stages*, and each house striving to out-do the rest, the *Musick* and *Voices* are always extraordinary. 'Tis almost incredible (says our *Author*) how one single *Town* can furnish them with *Spectators*: Yet all these Preparations are only for the *Carnaval*, and last but two Months, and some of the *Women* that *Sing* have four hundred *Pistols* paid them for that time; they never want Excellent *Trelles*, for many are made *Eunuchs* for that purpose, though it is very ridiculous to see those Effeminate Fellows with their *Mossy Chins*, play a *Hero's* or a *Lover's* part, which they mar by their cold liveless way of *Acting*. They have little or no *Machines* there; their *Decorations* and *Cloaths* are but mean, and their *Stages* but ill Illuminated, but their *Musick* makes amends for the Rest: Yet tho' *Strangers* cannot but admire it, they find, as Mr. *Dryden* ingeniously observes upon another Subject, That it is not pleasant to be tickled too long, and wish for the Conclusion usually before the

*Opera*

Opera be half done. *Gentleman's Journal*, January, 169 $\frac{1}{2}$ .

*Horace* was very angry with those empty Shows and Vanity, which the Gentlemen of his time ran like mad after.

——— *Insanos Oculos, & gaudia Vana.*

But, says *Rimer*, what would he have said to the French Opera of late so much in Vogue? There it is for you to bewitch your Eyes, and to charm your Ears. There is a Cup of Enchantment, there is Music and Machine; *Circe* and *Calipso* in Conspiracy against Nature and good Sense. 'Tis a Debauch the most insinuating, and the most pernicious; none would think an Opera and Civil Reason, should be the growth of one and the same Climate. But (says *Rimer*) shall we wonder at any thing for a Sacrifice to the Grand Monarch? such Worship, such Idol. All Flattery to him is insipid, unless it be prodigious: Nothing Reasonable, or within Compass, can come near the Matter. All must be monstrous, enormous, and outrageous to Nature, to be like him, or give any *Eccho* on his Appetite. Were *Rabelais* alive again, he would look on his *Garagantua*, as but a Pygmy.

*The Heroes Race excels the Poet's Thought.*

The Academy Royal, says *Rimer*, may pack up their Modes and Methods, & *pensées ingenieuses*; the *Racines* and the *Corneilles* must all now dance to the Tune



Tune of *Baptista*. Here is the *Opera*; here is *Machine* and *Baptista*, farewell *Apollo* and the *Muses*.

Away with your *Opera* from the Theatre, says *Rimer*; better had they become the *Heathen Temples*, or the *Corybantian Priests*, and (*Semiviros Gallos*) the old *Capons* of *Gaul*, than a People that pretend from *Charlemayn*, or descend from the undoubted *Loyns* of *Germain* and *Norman Conquerors*. *Rimer's Short View of Tragedy*, chap. i. pag. 9, 10.

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## Concerning Farce.

ALL other Species of *Dramatique Poetry*, have their due Respect amongst us; but I know not, says *Tate*, by what fate *Farce* is lookt upon to be so mean and inconsiderable. If it were to be judg'd by the Difficulty of the Work, we should soon change our Notion. I know it is generally suppos'd an easie Task, but it is such an Easiness as is well describ'd by *Horace*,

Ut sibi Quivis  
Speret Idem, sudet multum, frustra; laboret,  
Ausus Idem——

Or, as the Words are render'd with advantage by his Incomparable *Translator*, the *Earl of Roscommon*,

That

*That ev'ry One will think to write the same,  
And not without much Pains be undeceiv'd.*

The Reason (says *Tate*) I presume to be this, (and I am certain the Undertaker will find it true) that *Tragedy, Comedy, and Pastoral* it self, subsist upon *Nature*: So that whosoever has a *Genius* to Copy *Her*, is assur'd of Success, and all the World affords him Subject: Whereas the Business of *Farce* is to exceed *Nature* and *Probability*. But then there are so few Improbabilities that will appear Pleasant, and so much nicety requir'd in the management, that the Performance will be found extreamly difficult. **Nathaniel Tate's** *Pref. to A Duke and No Duke*.

That I admire not any *Comedy* equally with *Tragedy*, says *Dryden*, is, perhaps, from the sullenness of my humour; but that I detest those *Farces*, which are now the most frequent Entertainments of the Stage, I am sure I have Reason on my side. *Comedy* consists, though of low Persons, yet of Natural Actions, and Characters, I mean such Humours, Adventures, and Designs, as are to be found and met with in the World. *Farce*, on the other side, consists of forc'd Humours, and unnatural Events: *Comedy* presents us with the Imperfections of Humane Nature: *Farce* entertains us with what is monstrous and Chimerical: The *one* causes laughter in those who can judge of Men and Manners; by the lively Representation of their folly or corruption; the *other* produces the same Effect in those who can judge of neither, and that only by its extravagances. The *first* Works on the Judgment and  
Fancy;

Fancy ; the *latter* on the Fancy only : There is more of Satisfaction in the *former* kind of laughter, and in the *latter* more of Scorn. But, how it happens, that an impossible Adventure should cause our Mirth, I cannot (says *Dryden*) so easily imagine. Something there may be in the oddness of it, because on the Stage it is the common Effect of things unexpected to surprize us into a delight : And that is to be ascrib'd to the strange appetite, as I may call it, of the Fancy ; which, like that of a *Longing Woman*, often runs out into the most extravagant desires ; and is better satisfy'd sometimes with Loam, or with the Rinds of Trees, than with the wholesome nourishments of Life. In short, says *Dryden*, there is the same difference betwixt *Farce* and *Comedy*, as betwixt an *Empirick* and a *true Physician* : Both of them may attain their Ends ; but what the *one* performs by *hazard*, the *other* does by *skill*. And as the *Artist* is often successful, while the *Mountebank* succeeds ; so *Farces* more commonly take the *People* than *Comedies*. For to write *unnatural* things, is the most probable way of pleasing them, who understand not *Nature*. And a true Poet often misses of applause, because he cannot debase himself to Write so ill as to please his Audience. *Dryd. Pref. to the Mock-Astrologer.*

*The End of the Remarks upon Poetry.*



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Characters

# CHARACTERS

## AND

# CENSURES.

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### *Æschylus.*

**Æ**SCHYLUS an *Athenian Tragic Poet*; born in the Village of *Eleusis*; Cotemporary with *Pindar*, in the Sixty Ninth Olympiad, according to the Old *Scholiast*, but as *Mr. Stanly* in his most accurate Edition of this Author makes out by diligent Computation, and his Collection out of *Mr. Selden's Marmora Arundeliana*, in the Sixty Third. The Son of *Euphorion*, and Brother of *Cynegyryus* and *Aminias*, who Signaliz'd themselves in the Battle of *Marathon*, and the Sea-Fight of *Salamis*, in which our *Poet* also was present. Of Sixty Six *Drama's*, which he Wrote, (being Victor in 13) and Five *Satyrs*, we have Extant only Seven *Tragedies*, his *Prometheus Vinctus*, his *Septem Duces contra Thebas*, *Agamemnon*, *Persæ*, *Eumenides*, *Choephor*i, *Supplices*. But though he was Victor 13 times, yet it is said, he took it so to heart to be Vanquish't by *Sophocles*, then a Young man, that he left his Country, and betook himself to *Hiero* King of *Sicily*, where he made his *Tragedy Ætna*, so call'd from the City of that Name, which

*Hiero* was then Building, so named from the Mountain: Others say, it was because he was Vanquish'd by *Simonides* in his *Elegiac* Verse upon the Slain at *Marathon*. After he had been Resident at *Gela* Three Years, he dyed of a Fracture of his Skull, caus'd by an *Eagles* letting fall a *Shell-Fish* out of his Claw upon his Bald-Head, which seems to have been Portended by the *Oracle*, which being consulted upon the manner of his Death, Answer'd, *Ουφάνιον σὲ βέλος καπακτανεῖ*, this happen'd in the Sixty Ninth Year of his Age, according to *Stanley*.

He is mention'd by *Horace* as the first that Beautified and Adorn'd the Stage.

*Next, Æschylus the different Persons plac'd,  
And with a better Masque his Players grac'd:  
Upon a Theatre his Verse express'd,  
And shew'd his Hero with a Buskin dress'd.*

*Boileau's Art of Poetry, pag. 33.*

*Rimer* says, That at *Athens* (they tell us) the Tragedies of *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*, were Enroll'd with their *Laws*, and made part of their *Statute-Book*. *Rim. Short View of Tragedy, pag. 158.*

*Dryden* tells us, That the Poet *Æschylus* was held in the same Veneration by the *Athenians* of After-Ages, as *Shakespear* is with us; and *Longinus* has judg'd in favour of him, that he had a noble Boldness of Expression, and that his Imaginations were Lofly and Heroick: But on the other side *Quintilian* affirms, That he was daring to Extravagance. 'Tis certain, says *Dryden*, that he affected Pompous Words, and that his Sense too often was obscur'd by Figures: But notwithstanding these Imperfections, the Value of his Writings after his Decease was such, that his Country-men Ordain'd an equal Reward



Reward to those Poets, who could alter his Plays to be Acted on the Theatre, with those whose Productions were wholly new, and of their own.

*Æschylus* Writ nothing in Cold Blood, but was always in a Rapture, and in fury with his Audience: The Inspiration was still upon him, he was ever tearing it upon the *Tripes*; or (to run off as madly as he does, from one *Similitude* to another) he was always at high flood of *Passion*, even in the dead *Ebb*, and lowest *Water-Mark* of the Scene. *Dryd. Pref. to Troilus and Cressida.*

*Rapin* Remarks, That *Æschylus* had scarce any Principle for *Manners*, and for the *Decencies*; his *Fables* are too Simple, the *Contrivance* Wretched, the *Expression* Obscure and intricate; One can scarce Understand any thing of his Tragedy of *Agamemnon*. But because he believ'd, that the Secret of the Theatre is to speak *Pompously*, he bestow'd all his Art on the *Words*, without any regard to the *Thoughts*. *Quintilian* says, That he is Sublime and Lofty to Extravagance: Indeed, says *Rapin*, he never Speaks in *Cold-Blood*, and says the most indifferent things in a *Tragic Huff*; Likewise in the Images that he Draws, the Colours are too glaring, and the Strokes too gross. He, who Writes his Life, Relates that in one of the *Chorus's* of his Tragedy of the *Eumenides*, he so horribly frightened the Audience, that the Spectacle made the Children Swoond, and the Women with Child miscarry. To Conclude, his *Enthusiasm*, it seems, never left him, he is so Exalted, and so little Natural. *Rap. Reflex. on Aristotle's Book of Poësie, part 2. Sect. xxii.*

*Borrichius* observes, That *Æschylus* was very full of his *Metaphors*, which indeed deserve our praise, but yet, he says, they had been much more Commendable, if he had not broke off so abruptly in them.

He also takes notice, That his *Epithets* are for the most part *bold*, and *daring*, as too much favouring of his former Profession, that of a *souldier*. **Borrich.** *Dissert. de Poetis*, pag. 29.

The Author of the *Journal des Sçavans*, says, That *Æschylus* is a Poet so hard to be Understood, that even *Salmasius*, who was an excellent *Critick*, and whose chief delight lay in clearing the difficult Places of the most *Abstruse Authors*, was mightily puzzl'd, and perplext, at the difficulties he met with in *Æschylus*: Which gave him occasion, in one of his Books, to say, That *this Poet is more obscure than the Scripture it self*.

The same Author of the *Journal* observes, That *Æschylus*, in his Style, flies so very High, and uses such Lofty Expressions, that *Monsieur le Fevre*, in his *Abridgment* of the *Lives* of the *Greek Poets*, affirms this to be the only Reason of his having the Reputation of a *Drunkard*: As if his Discourse seem'd rather to proceed from the *Fumes* of *Wine*, than from *Solid Reason*. But to Conclude, *our Author* tells us, there are very Fine and Curious Things to be found in *this Poet*, and that among all the Ancient *Tragick Poets*, the *Greeks* had the greatest Value for him. **Gallois** *Journ. des Sçav. du 2. Mars*, 1665.

*Ælian*, in his *Various History*, relates, That *Æschylus*, being accus'd for some Impiety in one of his Plays, was Condemn'd to be Ston'd. Whereupon his Younger Brother *Aminias*, shewing his Arm without a hand, which he had lost at the Battle at *Salamis*, did so far influence the *Judges*, that in a grateful Memory of his good Services, they presently order'd *Æschylus* to be dismiss'd. **Ælian** *lib. 5. cap. xix.*

## Anacreon.

**A** Nacreon was born in *Teos*, a place in the middle of *Ionia*; He flourisht in the 61, and 62 *Olympiad*, as *Ensebius*, and *Suidas* affirm. He was one of the Nine *Lyricks*: And both in his Writings, and whole manner of Life, a merry *Greek*, wanton and amorous. He was very intimate with *Polycrates*, the Tyrant of *Samos*; whom he also celebrates in his Verses. Though aged, he fell in love with *Bathyllus*, a young Boy, of whose hard-heartedness he complains. He wrote in the *Ionick* Dialect.

Several of his Poems are yet extant, most whereof consist of *Drunken Catches*, *Billets doux*, &c.

Monsieur Bayle says, That *Sappho* and *Anacreon* are so very much alike in their Humours, and their way of Writing, that it is somewhat difficult to distinguish the *One* from the *Other*. 'Tis pity, says he, that they were not co-temporaries, for if they had, they ought to have been *Husband* and *Wife*, that so the World might have seen the effect of two such *Amorous*, and *Delicate* Souls. *Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres*, Novemb. 1684.

*Julius Scaliger* had so high a value for this Poet, That he tells us, He thought *Anacreon's* Verses sweeter than the best *Indian Sugar*. *Lib. 1. Cap. 44. Poëtices*.

*Ælian*, in his *Various History*, tells us, That *Hipparchus*, Eldest Son of *Pisistratus*, and the wisest of all the *Athenians*, did so highly esteem *Anacreon*, that He sent a Gally of fifty Oars to him, with the most obliging Letters in the World, to invite him to *Athens*. *Lib. 8. Cap. 2.*

Gerardus

## 6 Characters and Censures.

*Gerardus Johannes Vossius*, in his *Institutionum Poeticarum*, lib. 3. pag. 78. assures us, That *Anacreon* pass'd amongst the *Greeks* for one of the greatest Masters, both in the Art of *Complaisance*, and in the *Softness* of *Expression*.

*Mademoiselle le Fevre*, in the *Preface* to her curious Edition of *Anacreon*, says, That his Beauty, and chiefest Excellency lay in imitating *Nature*, and in following *Reason*; that he presented not to the Mind, any *Images*, but such as were *Noble* and *Natural*; and that he always took great care to avoid the *Points*, which were introduc'd in the latter times, contrary to the Practice of all the best Ancient Poets.

*Athenæus*, that famous Ancient Critick, in his *Dipsophist*, remarks, That notwithstanding the Beauty of *Anacreon's* Verse, yet every body could not relish him, for that his *Odes* were no other than *Drunken Catches*; and that at the same time he commended *Drunkenness*, he would often be so very *Obscene*, that he was not to be endur'd by the *Vertuous* part of Mankind.

He further adds, That *Anacreon* had one humour very ridiculous, which was, that if by great chance it happen'd, he was sober at the time he Compos'd his Verses, yet, tho' there was no occasion for it, he would be sure to feign himself *Drunk*.

*Rapin* tells us, That *Anacreon's* *Odes* are Flowers, Beauties, and perpetual Graces; and that it is so familiar to him to write what is *Natural*, and to the *Life*; he having an *Air* so delicate, so easie, and so graceful; that among all the *Ancients* there is nothing comparable to the method he took, nor to that kind of Writing he follow'd. *Rap. Reflex. on Aristotle's Treat. of Poesie*, part 2d. Sect. xxx.

*Anacreon*, in the Eighty Fifth Year of his Age, was choak'd with a *Grape-Stone*. Which gave occasion to *Abraham Cowley*, to exercise his Wit in these following Lines :

*And whilst I do thus discover  
Th' Ingredients of a happy Lover,  
'Tis my Anacreon, for thy sake,  
I of the Grape no mention make.  
Till my Anacreon by Thee fell,  
Curst Plant, I lov'd thee well,  
And 'twas oft my wanton use  
To dip my Arrows in thy juice.  
Curst Plant, 'tis true, I see,  
The Old report that goes of Thee,  
That with Gyants blood the Earth  
Stain'd and poyson'd gave Thee birth,  
And now thou wreak'st thy ancient spight,  
On Men in whom the Gods delight.*

*Cowley's Elegy upon Anacreon.*

## *Apollonius Rhodius.*

**H**E was *Callimachus's* Scholar; although *Alexandria* was his Countrey, yet he was call'd *Rhodius*, after he came from *Alexandria* to *Rhode*, and liv'd there a long time in great honour. Some tell us, that he succeeded *Eratosthenes* as Library-Keeper at *Alexandria*, in the Reign of *Ptolomy Evergetes*.

He wrote several Pieces, but there are none left, only his *Argonautica*. in four Books.

*Quintilian*

*Quintilian*, in his *Institut. Oratoriar. lib. X. Cap. 1.* says, That *Apollonius's Argonautica* is no contemptible work; and that in his *Stile* he observes an exact *Medium*, which is neither too lofty, nor too mean.

*Longinus*, in his Treatise *περί ὑψηλῶς*, is much of the same opinion with *Quintilian*, for he tells us, That *Apollonius* in his *Argonautica* never rises too high, or falls too low, but that he poises himself very exactly; But yet, for all this good Quality, *he thinks* he is infinitely short of *Homer*, take him with all his faults; inasmuch as the sublime, lofty Style, though subject to unevennesses, is to be preferr'd before any other sort.

*Lilius Gyraldus*, speaking of the *Argonautica*, says, It is a work full of variety, and a very laborious piece; but yet he owns, that in some places it is rough and unpleasant, but not where he describes the *Amours of Medea*, for even there *Virgil* thinks him so transcendent, that *he* has Copied many things from thence, inserting them into his own *Amours of Dido*. **Gyrald.** *de Hist. Poet. Dialog. 3.*

*Tanaguy le Fevre*, in his *Abridgment of the Lives of the Greek Poets*, pag. 147. agrees with *Gyraldus* in what he says relating to *Virgil*; but he can by no means yield to *Longinus's* Opinion, who affirm'd, that never any Man could find fault with the *Oeconomy* of that Work. *He* laughs also at those Criticks, who think, that the *Stile* is so very equal, soft and easie, saying, That he could never be brought to be of their Judgment; for that, as little as *he* understood Greek, he thought *he* could discern some difference of *Characters*.

*Claudius Verderius*, in his *Censio Auctorum*, pag. 46. says, That in the esteem of many Persons, the *stile of Apollonius* was look'd upon to be coarse and unpolish'd, and

and that he himself saw it ridicul'd upon that very score.

Hence therefore *Borrichius* in his *Dissertat. de Poetis*, pag. 15. tells us, That *Apollonius* finding, that the Verses which he had made in his Youth, were derided and exploded, as not being polish'd enough, he afterwards gave them a new turn, by which means they were thought so polite, as to deserve all Mens Applause.

*Rapin*, in the 2d. part of his *Reflex. on Aristot. Treatise of Poesie*, Sect. XV. remarks, That the Poem of *Apollonius Rhodius*, on the Expedition of the Argonauts, is of a slender Character, and has nothing of that nobleness of expression, which *Homer* has; that the Fable is ill invented, and the List of the Argonauts in the first Book Flat.

## Aratus

WAS born at *Soli* or *Soloe*, a Town of *Cilicia*; afterwards call'd *Pompeiopolis*; he was Physician to *Antigonus*, King of *Macedon*; A most learned Poet, and one that wrote diverse things, amongst others a Book of *Astronomy*, called *φαινόμενα*, in which he elegantly describes in *Heroick Verse* the whole Frame of the *Celestial Sphere*, the Image, Figure, Rising and Setting of all the Stars therein. He flourish'd in the time of *Ptolomæus Philadelphus*, in the cxxvi. Olympiad.

*Claudius* and *Germanicus Cæsar*, were so delighted with *Aratus's φαινόμενα*, that they, each of Them, Translated it into *Latin*: As did also *M. Tullius Cicero*, when he was

very young. And beside these, *Festus Avienus* turn'd it into Elegant *Latin Verse*.

*Ovid*, speaking of this Author, gives us his Character in these words, alluding to his *φαινόμενα* :

*Cum Sole & Lunâ semper Aratus erit.*

*Viz.* That as long as *Sun* and *Moon* endur'd, so long would the Fame of *Aratus* continue.

*Cicero*, in his first Book *De Oratore*, tells us, That the Verses of *Aratus* were very fine and Elegant, but that he had little skill in *Astrology*.

*Quintilian*, in his *Institution. Oratoriar. lib. x. cap. 1.* says, That the Verses of *Aratus* are without Life or Spirit, and that they have not those Ornaments, nor that Poetical variety, which uses to affect the Reader : And yet he tells us, He was a person proper enough for the Work he undertook.

*Gerardus Vossius*, in his Book *De Scientiis Mathematicis*, affirms, That *Aratus* was formerly, and is still, of very great Authority among *Astronomers*.

The Authority of *Aratus* was esteem'd so sacred among the *Ancients*, that we find him quoted by *St. Paul* himself, *Acts the xvii. Verse the 28.*

There is not any thing a greater Demonstration of the Credit of this Author, than the vast Number of his *Commentators*.

*Macrobius*, in his *Saturnal. lib. v. cap 2.* says, That *Virgil* in his *Georgicks* borrow'd several Things from *Aratus's φαινόμενα*.

*Aristophanes.*



## Aristophanes.

**A**ristophanes was a famous Comick Poet, but of his Country nothing is certain: Some say he was an Athenian, others a Rhodian, and some an Egyptian. He was contemporary with Sophocles the Tragick Poet, and also with Socrates, whom he makes an Object of his Wit in his Comedy call'd *Nubes*; as he doth Cleon and Nicias, two Magistrates of Athens, in his *Equites* and *Georgia*; He flourish'd from the Eighty fifth to the Ninety first Olympiad, and wrote, according to Suidas, no less than fifty four Comedies, whereof we have now but Eleven left, viz. *Plutus*, *Nubes*, *Ranæ*, *Equites*, *Acharnenses*, *Vespæ*, *Aves*, *Pax*, *Concionatrides*, *Cerealia Festa celebrantes*, *Lystrata*. To conclude, He was the chief Writer of the Old Comedy, as Menander of the New.

In this Author are to be found all the Ornaments of the Attick Dialect, which made St. Chrysostome so much admire him; that whenever he went to sleep, he still laid him under his Pillow.

Let no Man, says Joseph Scaliger, in the first part of *Scaligerana*, pretend to understand the Attick Dialect, who has not Aristophanes at his fingers ends. pag. 23.

Tanaquillus Faber, in his Notes upon the fore-mention'd place, tells us, how much he is in love with Scaliger for saying this. The truth on't is, says Faber, I have spent above fifteen Years to understand this Author, nor do I think I have cause to repent it.

Lilius Gyraldus informs us, That Aristophanes was reputed the most Eloquent of all the Athenians, and that they look'd upon him to be the most Considerable of their Beaux Esprits; That he abounds with fine, cu-

rious Sentences; *That* there is in his Invention a variety that is surprizing, but yet agreeable; and, *that* he understood how to give every thing its *turn*, which, as *Gyraldus* tells us, gave him the preference from all the other *Comick Poets*.

*Mademoiselle le Fevre*, in the *Preface* to her Edition of *Aristophanes*, remarks, that one may find in this Author, some Instructions, that may be of great use both to the *Politician* and the *Souldier*. For it seems, these *Comedies* of his, did as it were represent to the *Athenians* the whole State of their Affairs. And therefore well might *Plato*, writing to *Dionysius* the *Tyrant*, tell him, That if he had a mind to have an exact Scheme of the Condition of the *Athenians*, he need only read the Works of *Aristophanes*.

He assembl'd his Spectators, says *Mademoiselle le Fevre*, not to fawn upon them and flatter them, or to divert them with Buffoonry and Fooleries; but to give 'em solid Instructions, which he knew how to make them relish, by seasoning them with a thousand pleasant Inventions, which no body but himself was able to do.

Never any Man, says the same *le Fevre* in her said *Preface*, had better skill in discerning the *Ridiculous* part, nor a *turn* more Ingenious to make it appear. His *Criticks* are natural and easie; and, which does not often happen, notwithstanding he is so Copious, he still sustains the delicacy of his Character.

She adds, That the *Attick Spirit*, which the *Ancients* have so much bragg'd of, appears more in *Aristophanes*, than in any other Author of Antiquity, that *She* knows of; but, that what is most to be admir'd in him, is, that he is always so absolute a *Master* of the *Matter* he treats of, that, with all the ease imaginable, he finds a way  
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how to make those very things, which at first might appear the most remote from his *Subject*, fall in naturally; and, that, even his most lively, and least expected *Caprices*, seem'd but as the natural Results of those *Incidents* he had prepar'd.

*She* further tells us, That nothing can be more Ingenious, than the whole Contexture of the *Comedy* call'd *Nabes*; And that the chief thing therein, which *She* most admires at, is, That *Aristophanes* has so well hit the *Air* and *Humour* of *Socrates* in the *Ridiculous* part; which is done so naturally, that a Man would really think he heard *Socrates* himself speak. *She* says, she was so much Charm'd with this Piece, that after she had Translated it, and had read it two hundred times over, she did not find her self in the least cloy'd, which was more than she could say of any other Piece besides.

To conclude, *Mademoiselle le Fevre* speaking of the *Style* of *Aristophanes*, says, *This* is as agreeable as his *Wit*. For besides its purity, force, and sweetness, it has a certain Harmony, which sounds so pleasant to the Ear, that the very *Reading* him is extremely delightful. At any time, when he has occasion to make use of the common ordinary *Stile*, he does it without using any Expression that is base and vulgar; and when he has a mind to express himself in the lofty *Style*, in his highest flight he is never obscure; In a word, *She* tells us, No person ever understood how to make use of all the different Sorts of *Style*, like *Aristophanes*. **Ann. le Fevre's** Pref. to her *French Translat.* of the Two *Comedies* of *Aristophanes*.

*Rimer* tells us, That *Aristophanes* was a Man of wonderful Zeal for Vertue, and the good of his Countrey; that he laid about him with an undaunted Resolution, as  
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it were some *Christian Martyr*, for his Faith and Religion. He plainly ran a Muck at all manner of Vice where ever he saw it, be it in the greatest *Philosophers*, the greatest *Poets*, the *Generals*, or the *Ministers of State*.

The *Persian Ambassador*, who was *Lieger* there (as formerly the *French* with us) seeing the Town all at his beck; and the *Government* taking Aim, Turning out, Disgracing, Impeaching, Banishing, Out-Lawing, and Attainting the great Men, according as he hinted, or held up the Finger; the Ambassador, not understanding the *Athenian Temper*, says *Rimer*, was astonish'd at the Man. And, for all the *Democracy*, no less bold was he with his *Sovereign, Legislative People*: Representing them, taking Bribes, selling their Votes, bought off. He tells 'em (as the practice amongst them) that the *Government* had no occasion for Men of *Wit* or *Honesty*. The most Ignorant, the most Impudent, and the greatest Rogue stood fairest always for a Place, and the best qualified to be their Chief Minister. He tells 'em, nothing shall fright him; *Truth* and *Honesty* are on his side; he has the *Heart* of *Hercules*, will speak what is Just and Generous, tho' *Cerberus*, and all the Kennel of Hell-Hounds were loo'd upon him. But then (says *Rimer*) his Address was Admirable: He would make the Truth Visible and Palpable, and every way sensible to them. The Art and the Application; his strange Fetches, his lucky Stars; his odd Inventions, the wild Turns, Returns, and Counter-turns (says *Rimer*) were never match'd, nor are ever to be reach'd again. *Rim. Short View of Tragedy, chap. 2. pag. 22, 23.*

*Rapin* Remarks, That *Aristophanes* is not exact in the Contrivance of his *Fables*, and that his *Fictions* are not very probable; that he Mocks Persons too grossely,

grofely, and too openly. *Socrates*, whom he Plays upon fo eagerly in his *Comedies*, (fays *Rapin*) had a more delicate *Air* of *Raillery* than he; but was not fo shamelefs. It is true, *Aristophanes* Writ during the Disorder and Licentiousnefs of the *Old Comedy*, and that he understood the Humour of the *Athenian* People, who were eafily difgusted with the Merit of extraordinary Perfons, whom he fet his Wit to abuse, that he might pleafe *that People*. After all, fays *Rapin*, he often is no otherwife pleafant, than by his Buffoonry. That *Razouft*, Compos'd of Seventy Six Syllables in the laft Scene of his *Comedy* the *Ecclefiafoufai*, would not (fays *Rapin*) go down with us in our Age. His Language is often obfcure, blunder'd, low, trivial; and his frequent jingling upon Words, his Contradictions of oppofite Terms each to other; the Hotchpotch of his Stile, of *Tragick* and *Comick*, of Serious and Buffoon, of Grave and Familiar, is unfeemly; and his *Witticifms* often, when well Examin'd, prove falfe. *Rap. Reflex. on Aristot. Treatife of Poefie, par. 2. feét. xxvi.*

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## *Aristotle,*

**T**HE Famous Philofopher of *Stagira*; who, befides the many other Works he Wrote, is faid, according to *Diogenes Laertius*, to have Written as many *Poems*, as contain Forty Five Thoufand, Three Hundred, and Thirty Verfes. But had he never Compos'd any *Poem*, yet certainly that moft Incomparable Piece of *His*, concerning the *Art* of *Poetry*, which by all the World is counted

counted the best *Model* for *Poets* to follow, may well allow him to be Rank'd amongst the most Considerable *Poets*.

He Died, according to *Calvicius*, in the Sixty Third Year of his Age, Three Hundred and Nineteen Years before *Christ*.

I find there are some *Criticks*, and among others *Petrus Victorius*, in his *Comment* upon *Aristotle's* Art of *Poetry*, who think, that this Piece of *Aristotle's* was never finish'd, nor perfected; and, in all probability, the ground of this Opinion, was, because they did not find, that *Aristotle* had writ any thing concerning *Comedy*, as a late *Anonymous* Author has observ'd in his *Bibliograph. curios. Histor. Philolog. &c. pag. 45*. But the Learned *Gerardus Johannes Vossius*, in his *De Natura Artis Poeticæ, cap. v. pag. 28*. is of the contrary Opinion, viz. That *Aristotle* had finish'd, and given the last strokes to this most Excellent Work; And this, says *Vossius*, may easily be prov'd by that curious *Method*, and admirable concatenation, which he hath observ'd from first to last.

*Lilius Gyraldus* tells us, That *Aristotle* was not only the Master and Patriarch of *Philosophy*, *Logick*, and *Rhetorick*, but also, that he was greatly skill'd in *Poetry*, both in respect of the Art, and the Composing of *Verses*.

*Rimer* says, That *Aristotle* was the very first that Antiquity honour'd with the Name of Critick.

It is indeed suspected, that he dealt not always fairly with the *Philosophers*, mis-reciting sometimes, and misinterpreting their Opinions. But (says *Rimer*) I find him not tax'd of that injustice to the *Poets*, in whose favour he is so Ingenious, that to the disadvantage of his own Profession, he declares, That *Tragedy* more conduces to  
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the Instruction of Mankind, than even Philosophy it self. And howe'r Aristotle may be cry'd down in the Schools, and vilified by some Modern Philosophers; yet since Men have had a taste for good Sense, and could discern the Beauties of correct Writing, he is preferr'd in the politest Courts of Europe, and by the Poets held in great Veneration. Not that these can servilely yield to his Authority, who, of all Men living, affect Liberty. The truth is, (says Rimer) what Aristotle Writes on this Subject, are not the Dictates of his own Magisterial-Will, or dry Deductions of his Metaphysicks: But the Poets were his Masters, and what was their Practice, he reduced to Principles. Nor would the Modern Poets, blindly resign to this Practice of the Ancients, were not the Reasons convincing and clear as any Demonstration in Mathematicks. 'Tis only needful that we understand them, for our Consent to the Truth of them. *Rim. Pref. to his Translat. of Rapin's Reflex. on Aristot. of Poesie.*

Rapin tells us, That Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie, to speak properly, is nothing else, but Nature put in Method, and good Sense reduc'd to Principles. There is no arriving at Perfection but by these Rules, and they certainly go astray that take a different Course. What faults have not most of the Italian, Spanish, and other Poets fallen into, through their Ignorance of these Principles? And if a Poem, (says Rapin) made by these Rules, fails of Success, the fault lies not in the Art, but in the Artist; all who have Writ of this Art, have follow'd no other Idea, but that of Aristotle. *Rap. Advertism. before his Reflex. on Arist.*

The Learned *Anonymous German Author*, in his *Bibliograph. Curios. Histor. Philolog. &c. pag. 45.* calls *Aristotle's Art of Poetry* a Golden Fragment, containing most Admirable Remarks, relating to the Rules of true Grammar, and the soundest Maxims of *Rhetorick*. He adds, That the little which is left concerning *Tragedy* is Incomparable, and that one can hardly find among the *Ancients* any thing that is of a better taste.

But notwithstanding the general Vogue, that this Treatise of *Aristotle* has had in the World, yet that great Critick *Julius Scaliger*, in the Epistle to his Son *Sylvius*, before his *Poëtica*, has different Sentiments, for he calls it a Lame and Imperfect Work; and that if it were not for Respect to that *Philosopher*, he tells us, he could say a great deal more. But the Learned *Gerardus Johannes Vossius*, in the Preface to his *Institutiones Poëticae*, falls upon *Scaliger* for this Opinion, saying, That he can by no means think this Treatise of *Aristotle* so despicable a Work; That, for his part, he did not know any thing Writ by the *Ancients* upon this Subject, that did come up to it; And that such *Modern Writers* as have Treated of the *Art of Poetry*, have still got more or less Reputation, in proportion to their Observing or not Observing that Excellent Model, given by *Aristotle*.



## Decius Magnus Ausonius,

**W**AS Born at Bourdeaux in France. He was Præceptor to Gratian the Emperour, by whom he was made Consul, in the Year 379. Bellarmin, Gyraldus, and some others, suppose him to have been a Christian, but Gerard Vossius positively affirms, that he was a Heathen.

He Writ several Things in Verse, and some in Prose.

Johannes Ludovicus Vives, in his Third Book *De Tractandis Disciplinis*, tells us, That *Ausonius* is every where so full of Wit and Smartness, that he never suffers his Reader to fall asleep.

Johannes Brodæus, lib. 1. *Miscellan. cap. vi.* says, That he does not think *Ausonius's* Stile so impolite, as those do, who, by way of Reproach, call him *Ferreum Scriptorem*, a Writer as hard as Iron.

Erasmus in *Dialogo Ciceroniano*, pag. 149. allows, That *Ausonius* had both Wit and Learning; but that his Style was every whit as loose and effeminate, as his Life; and that he was so far from having the least favour of *Cicero's* Style, that one might as well call a German a French-Man, as call *Ausonius* Ciceronian.

Olaus Borrichius, in his *Dissertat. Acad. de Poetis*, pag. 73. affirms, That all the Works of *Ausonius* were elaborate, choice, and ingenious; but that he could not always free himself from the Dregs of the Age he liv'd in.

Joseph Scaliger, in his Notes upon *Virgil*, tells us, That *Ausonius* was the most Learned of all the Poets

from *Domitian* down to that time, and that it is very well worth any Man's while to read him.

*Caspar Barthius*, in his Third Book *Adversus*. cap. vii. says, That he will bear *Ausonius* Witness, that whatsoever is to be found in him, ought to be look'd upon as true and good *Latin*; for that he never set down any thing, but he had some example from the *Ancients* for his Authority.

He also tells us, That *Ausonius* was too Learned for the Age he liv'd in, and that the Authors which he took most delight in Reading, were lost.

*Julius Scaliger*, in his Sixth Book *De Poëtica*, cap. v. observes to us, That *Ausonius* was one of a great, and an acute Wit; but that his Stile is somewhat harsh; That he is not all of a Piece; That he has Writ on several Subjects, but not alwayas with the same success; and that therefore we are not to Judge of him, from what he hath done, but from what he could have done. He wishes, That *Ausonius* had never Writ any of his *Epigrams*; since, in his opinion, there is not one of them that is finish'd and polish'd as it ought to be; nay, he says, some are Impertinent, cold, and frivolous; for that, whenever he Translated from the *Greek*, he never minded to carry the Original Beauty into the *Latin*: Others are so filthy and abominable, that they rather deserve the *Flame*, than the *Sponge*.

He adds, that this Author was very careless and negligent, and therefore it is, that we find many of his *Iambicks*, which though at the beginning seem pure and elaborate, yet in the conclusion they prove sculent, and full of dregs.

As for his other *Poems*, says *Scaliger*, viz. his *Gryphus de Numero Ternario*, and his *Eclogues*, they are indeed very

very good, and must be allow'd to be writ by one who had a great skill in Poetry.

But the most celebrated Piece of *Ausonius*, in the Opinion of *Scaliger*, is his *Poem* upon the *Moselle*; This, saith he, was so elaborate a Work, that had *Ausonius* writ nothing else, this would have been sufficient to have got him the Character of a Great Poet; there being in it a great deal of Art, Method, Fine Language, Genius, Candor, and Sharpness. *Jul. Scalig. lib. vi. Poetices, cap. v.*

*Lilius Gyraldus* says, That tho' *Ausonius* was a Christian, yet in his Writings he was often so Obscene and Lascivious, that he did not deserve to be reckon'd among the Christians.

He says, There's a great deal of Learning in the *Gryphus*, and also abundance of curious Variety; but that he does not find there is much either of Judgment, or of Elegancy in it.

## Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher.

MR. Beaumont's Parentage, Birth, Country, Education, and Death, are wholly unknown to Me; And as to Mr. Fletcher, all I know of him is, That he was Son to the Eminent Dr. Richard Fletcher, who was created Bishop of Bristol, by Queen Elizabeth, Ann. 1559. and by her prefer'd to London, 1593. He dyed in London of the Plague, Anno. 1625. being Nine and Forty Years of Age, and was buried in St. Mary-Overies Church in Southwark.

There

There are Two and Fifty Plays written by these worthy Authors; all which are now extant in one Volume. Printed in Fol. Lond. 1679.

*Winstanley* tells us, That *Beaumont* and *Fletcher* joyned together, made one of the happy *Triumvirate* (the other two being *Johnson* and *Shakespeare*) of the chief *Dramatick* Poets of our Nation, in the last foregoing Age; among whom there might be said to be a *Symmetry of Perfection*, while each excell'd in his peculiar way: *Ben. Jonson* in his elaborate Pains and Knowledge of Authors; *Shakespeare* in his pure Vein of Wit, and natural *Poetick* Height; *Fletcher* in a Courtly Elegance, and Genteel Familiarity of Style, and withal a Wit and Invention so over-flowing, that the Luxuriant Branches thereof were frequently thought convenient to be lopt off by *Beaumont*; which Two joyned together, like *Castor* and *Pollux* (most happy when in Conjunction) raised the *English* to equal the *Athenian* and *Roman* Theaters. *Winstanley*, of the most famous *English* Poets.

*Dryden* says, That *Beaumont* and *Fletcher* had, with the advantage of *Shakespeare's* Wit; which was their precedent, great Natural Gifts, improv'd by Study. *Beaumont* especially being so accurate a Judge of *Plays*, that *Ben. Johnson*, while he liv'd, submitted all his Writings to his Censure, and, 'tis thought, us'd his judgment in Correcting, if not contriving all his Plots. What value he had for him, appears by the Verses he writ to him; and therefore (says *Dryden*) I need speak no farther of it. The first Play that brought *Fletcher* and him in esteem, was their *Philaster*; for before that, they had written two or three very unsuccessfully: As the like is reported of *Ben. Johnson*, before he writ *Every Man in his Humour*. Their Plots were generally more regular  
than

than *Shakespear's*, especially those which were made before *Beaumont's* death; and they understood and imitated the Conversation of *Gentlemen* much better; whose wild Debaucheries, and quickness of Wit in *Repartees*, no Poet before them could paint as *they* have done. *Humour*, which *Ben Johnson* deriv'd from particular Persons, *they* made it not their business to describe: *They* represented all the *Passions* very lively, but above all, *Love*. I am apt to believe, says *Dryden*, the English Language in *them* arriv'd to its highest perfection; what words have since been taken in, are rather superfluous than ornamental. *Their Plays* are now the most pleasant and frequent Entertainments of the Stage; *two* of *theirs* being acted through the Year for *one* of *Shakespear's* or *Johnson's*: The reason is, says *Dryden*, because there is a certain gayetie in *their* Comedies, and *Pathos* in their more serious Plays, which suits generally with all Mens Humours. *Shakespear's* Language is likewise a little obsolete, and *Ben. Johnson's* Wit comes short of *theirs*.  
*Wryd. Essay of Dramatick Poesie, pag. 34.*

'Tis one of the Excellencies of *Shakespear*, that the *Manners* of his *Persons* are generally apparent; and you see their bent and Inclinations. *Fletcher* comes far short of him in *this*, as indeed he does almost in every thing, says *Dryden*: There are but glimmerings of *Manners* in most of his *Comedies*, which run upon Adventures: And in his *Tragedies*, *Rollo*, *Otto*, the *King* and *No King*, *Melanti*, and many others of his best, are but Pictures shown you in the *twi light*; you know not whether they resemble Vice or Virtue, and they are either good, bad, or indifferent, as the present Scene requires it. But of all *Poets*, this Commendation is to be given to *Ben. Johnson*, that the *Manners* even of the most incon-

siderable

siderable Persons in his Plays are every where apparent.

**Dryd.** *Pref. to Troilus and Cressida.*

The Characters of *Fletcher* are poor and narrow, in Comparison of *Shakespear's*; I remember not one (says *Dryden*) which is not borrowed from him; unless you will except that strange mixture of a Man in the *King* and *No King*: So that in this part *Shakespear* is generally worth our Imitation; and to imitate *Fletcher* is but to Copy after him who was a Copyer. **Dryd.** *ibid.*

The Excellency of *Shakespear* was in the more manly Passions; *Fletcher's* in the softer: *Shakespear* writ better betwixt Man and Man; *Fletcher*, betwixt Man and Woman: Consequently, the One describ'd *Friendship* better; the other *Love*: Yet *Shakespear* taught *Fletcher* to write *Love*; and *Juliet*, and *Desdemona*, are Originals. 'Tis true, says *Dryden*, the Scholar had the Softer Soul; but the Master had the Kinder. Friendship is both a *Virtue*, and a *Passion* essentially; *Love* is a *Passion* only in its Nature, and is not a *Virtue* but by Accident: Good nature makes *Friendship*; but Effeminacy *Love*. *Shakespear* had an Universal Mind, which comprehended all Characters and Passions; *Fletcher* a more confin'd, and limited: For though he treated *Love* in perfection, yet Honour, Ambition, Revenge, and generally all the stronger Passions, he either touch'd not, or not Masterly. To conclude all; He was a Limb of *Shakespear*. **Dryd.** *Pref. to Troilus and Cressida.*

*Fletcher, to thee, we do not only owe  
All these good Plays, but those of others too;  
Thy Wit repeated, does support the Stage,  
Credits the last, and entertains this Age;  
No Worthies form'd by any Muse but thine,  
Could purchase Robes, to make themselves so fine.*

*What*

*What brave Commander is not proud to see  
Thy brave Melantius in his Gallantry?  
Our greatest Ladies love to see their Scorn  
Out-done by thine, in what themselves have worn;  
Th' impatient Widow e're the Tear be done,  
Sees thy Aspasia weeping in her Gown.  
I never yet the Tragick strain essay'd,  
Deterr'd by that inimitable Maid:  
And when I venture at the Comick stile,  
Thy Scornful Lady seems to mock my toil.  
Thus has thy Muse, at once, improv'd and marr'd  
Our sport in Plays, by rendring it too hard;  
So when a sort of lusty Shepherds throw  
The Bar by Turns, and none the rest out-goe  
So far, but that the best are measuring casts,  
Their emulation, and their pastime lasts;  
But if some brawny Feoman of the Guard  
Step in, and toss the Axle-tree a yard,  
Or more, beyond the farthest Mark, the rest  
Despairing stand, their Sport is at the best.*

**Edm. Waller.**

*How I do love thee Beaumont, and thy Muse,  
That unto Me do'st such Religion use!  
How I do fear my self, that am not worth  
The least indulgent Thought thy Pen drops forth!  
At once thou mak'st me happy, and unmak'st;  
And giving largely to Me, more thou tak'st.  
What Fate is mine, that so it self bereaves?  
What Art is thine, that so thy Friend deceives?  
When even there where most thou praisest Me,  
For Writing better, I must envy Thee.*

**Ben. Johnson.**

————— *I need not raise*  
*Trophies to Thee from other Mens dispraise ;*  
*Nor is thy Fame on lesser Ruines built,*  
*Nor needs thy juster Title the foul guilt*  
*Of Eastern Kings, who to secure their Reign,*  
*Must have their Brothers, Sons, and Kindred slain.*  
*Then was Wits Empire at the Fatal height,*  
*When labouring and sinking with its weight,*  
*From thence a Thousand lesser Poets sprung,*  
*Like petty Princes from the fall of Rome.*  
*When Johnson, Shakespear, and thy self did sit,*  
*And sway'd in the Triumvirate of Wit———*  
*Yet what from Johnson's Oil, and Sweat did flow,*  
*Or what more easie Nature did bestow*  
*On Shakespear's gentle Muse, in Thee full grown*  
*Their Graces both appear, yet so, that none*  
*Can say here Nature ends, and Art begins,*  
*But mixt like th' Elements, and born like Twins ;*  
*So interweav'd, so like, so much the same,*  
*None, this meer Nature, that meer Art can name :*  
*'Twas this the Ancients meant ; Nature and Skill*  
*Are the two tops of their Parnassus Hill.*

**J. Denham** on **Fletcher's** Works.

*He that hath such Acuteness, and such Wit,*  
*As would ask Ten good Heads to husband it ;*  
*He that can Write so well, that no Man dare*  
*Refuse it for the best, let him beware :*

*Beaumont is dead ! by whose sole Death appears,*  
*Wit's a Disease consumes Men in few Tears.*

**Rich. Corbet, D. D.** on **Mr. Francis Beaumont.**  
 (Then newly Dead.)

*Ludovico*



## Ludovico Ariosto,

**B**Orn in *Ferrara*, One of the two most Celebrated Heroick Poets of *Italy*; and thereupon Competitor with *Torquato Tasso* the other. He died the 13<sup>th</sup> of July, 1533. In the fifty ninth Year of his Age. He wrote some *Latin* Poems, which are inserted in the first Tome of the *Deliciæ Italarum Poetarum*. They are there mixt, and confounded with the Works of several other Poets of no great Note: But his *Italian* Poems had a better fate, for they being more valu'd and esteem'd, were Printed by themselves. The chief of his *Italian* Poems are, 1. His *Satyrs*, which, at their first coming into the World, had a Vogue, but in this Age they are not much valu'd. 2. His *Comedies*, whereof the most famous are *Il Negromante*, *La Cassaria*, *Gli Suppositi*, *La Lena*, and *La Scolastica*. But that which most contributed to *Ariosto's* Fame, was his Heroick Poem of *Orlando Furioso*, wherein he takes his Argument from the Expedition of the Emperour *Charles the Great* against the *Saracens* in *Spain*; This Poem cost *Ariosto* twenty Years Labour; though, as the Story goes, *Cardinal d'Est*, to whom it was Dedicated, had so mean an Opinion of it, that he cry'd out to *Ariosto*, Dove. Diavolo, Messer Ludovico, avete pigliate tante Coglionerie, Whence, the Devil, Master Lewis, hast thou taken all these Fooleries?

*Paulus Jovius*, in his *Elogies* of Learned Men, says, That of all the *Comedies* of *Ariosto*, the *Suppositi* ought to be preferr'd; scarce inferiour to those of *Plautus*, for Invention, and its various Beauties and Graces.

*Joh. Ant. Bumaldus*, otherwise call'd *Ovidius Montalbani*, in his *Bibliotheca Bononiensis*, tells us, That all the *Comedies* of *Ariosto* were writ with exquisite Art; and that his *Epick Poem* of *Orlando Furioso* was so Univerſally eſteem'd of, that it had been Translated into moſt of the Languages of *Europe*.

*Rapin*, in the firſt part of his *Reflections* on *Ariſtotle's* Book of *Poeſie*, ſect. 2. remarks, That *Ariſto* has too much Flame. And *Section* xi, he takes notice, into what Enormities *Petrarch* hath run in his *Africa*; *Ariſto* in his *Orlando Furioſo*; Cavalier *Marino* in his *Adonis*, and all the other *Italians* who were ignorant of *Ariſtole's* Rules; and follow'd no other Guides but their own *Genius* and *Capricious* Fancy: The truth is, ſays *Rapin*, the *Wits* of *Italy* were ſo prepoſſeſs'd in favour of the *Romantick* Poetry of *Pulci*, *Boyardo* and *Ariſto*, that they regarded no other Rules, than what the Heat of their *Genius* inspir'd.

The ſame Author in the Second part of thoſe *Reflections*, *Sect.* 8. obſerves, That *Ariſto's* *Episodes* are too Affected, never probable, never prepar'd, and often without any dependance on his Subject, as that of King *Agramante* and *Marfiſa*; but theſe things are not to be expected from a *Poem*, where the *Heroes* are *Paladins*: And where predominates an Air of *Chimerical* and *Romantick Knight-Errantry*, rather than any *Heroick* Spirit.

But, to conclude, *Rapin*, *Sect.* 16. tells us, That *Ariſto* had ſomewhat more of an *Epick Poem* than the reſt of the *Italians*, becauſe he had read *Homer* and *Virgil*; He is pure, Great, Sublime, admirable in the Expression; His Descriptions are Maſter-pieces; but he has no judgment at all; his Wit (ſays *Rapin*) is like the fruitful Ground, that together produces *Flowers* and *Thiſtles*; He

He speaks well, but thinks ill, and tho' all the Pieces of his *Poem* are pretty, yet the whole Work together is nothing worth, for an *Epick Poem*: He had not then seen the Rules of *Aristotle*, as *Tasso* did afterwards, who is better than *Ariosto*, says *Rapin*, whatever the *Academy* of *Florence* say to the Contrary.

*Dryden*, in his *Dedication* to the Earl of *Dorset* before the *Translation* of *Juvenal*, pag. 7. says, That *Ariosto*, an *Epick Poet*, neither Design'd Justly, nor Observ'd any Unity of Action, or Compass of Time, or Moderation in the Vastness of his Draught; His Style, says *Dryden*, is Luxurious, without Majesty, or decency; And his Adventures, without the Compass of *Nature* and *Possibility*.

Sir *Will. Temple*, in his *Essay* of Poetry, pag. 46. Remarks, That, *Ariosto* and *Tasso* enter'd boldly upon the Scene of *Heroick Poems*, but having not Wings for so High Flights, began to learn of the Old ones, fell upon their Imitations, and chiefly of *Virgil*, as far as the Force of their *Genius*, or Disadvantage of New Languages and Customs would allow.

## John Boccace,

A Most generally known and extolled *Florentine* Writer, and worthily Rank'd among the *Poets*, not only for his *Bucolicks*, but several other Writings of a *Poetical Nature*, as his *Genealogia di Dei*, his *Huomini Illustri*, his *Decameron*, his *Novels*, &c. besides which he wrote several other Things both *Historical* and *Geographical*. He

He was Born at Certaldum, a Town belonging to the Dutchey of Florence, in the Year 1314. He dyed in the Year 1375. or, according to *Vossius*, 1376.

*Johannes Trithemius*, in his *De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis*, says, That *Boccace*, in Secular Learning, far Exceeded all of that Age, and that he was not altogether unskill'd in Matters of Divinity.

He further says, That he was both a *Poet*, a *Philosopher*, and an Excellent *Astronomer*; and that he was a Man of a quick, ready Wit, and a good Orator.

*Janus Jacobus Boissardus*, in his *Icones Virorum Illustrium*, tells us, That *Boccace* has Written several Pieces; all which do sufficiently shew both the great Learning, and the indefatigable pains of the Author.

*Gerardus Johannes Vossius*, lib. iii. *De Historicis Latinis*, cap. i. speaking of *Boccace's Genealogia Deorum*, says, That very Book got him a great Reputation, both for Learning and Industry.

But the Learned *Konigius*, in his *Bibliotheca*, tells us, That some think, this was none of his own, and that he only transcrib'd it.

*Isaac Bullart*, in his *Academie des Sciences*, says, That the most considerable of all *Boccace's* Works was his *Decameron*, which had been receiv'd with the Universal Applause of all *Italy*; and that it was so well approv'd of in Foreign Parts, that it was Translated into almost all Languages; and that the more it was suppress'd, and censur'd, by reason of some severe Reflections upon the *Monks*, the more it was desir'd, and sought after.

*Lilius Gyraldus* Remarks, That *Petrarch* and *Boccace* had a *Poetical Genius*, but *that* they did not shew either Judgment or Accuracy in their *Poems*, which unhappiness he chiefly ascrib'd to the Age they liv'd in.

*Eraſmus* in *Ciceroniano*, pag. 155. ſays, That *Blondus* and *Boccace* were inferiour to *Petrarch*, both as to the force and energy of *Stile*, and alſo the Purity and Propriety of the *Latin Tongue*.

*Ludovicus Vives*, lib. 3. *De Tradendis Disciplinis*, tells us, That *Boccace* was *Petrarch's* Scholar, and *that* he was in no reſpect to be compared with his *Maſter*.

But in another Place he Remarks, That *Boccace's* *Genealogia Deorum*, was a Work much beyond the Age he liv'd in; though he own'd, he was ſometimes very Dull and Tedious in his *Mythological* Expoſitions.

*Salvati*, in his *Preface* to the *Italian Grammar* of the *Port-Royal*, pag. 6. obſerves, That *Boccace* was much the more Correct, and Natural in his *Proſe*, than in his *Verſe*.

And *Paulus Jovius* tells us, It was the common ſaying in his time, That as *Petrarch* had but ill luck in *Proſe*, ſo *Boccace* was Unfortunate in *Verſe*.

*Rapin* Obſerves to us, That *Boccace* Wrote with great Purity in his own Tongue; but *that* he was too trivial and familier, to deſerve the Name of an *Heroick Poet*. *Rap. Reflex. on Ariſtot. Treat. of Poefie*, part 2. *Seſt.* 16.

He alſo in another place Remarks, That *Boccace's* Wit is juſt, but not Copious. *Rap. Ibid. part 1. Seſt.* 2.

And

And, to conclude, *He* accuses him of great Vanity, in making *himself* the constant Subject of his Discourse.

*Boccace's Decads, or Novels, are Prohibited by the Church of Rome, being inserted in the Index Expurgatorius. Printed in Octavo, 1681. at Rome.*

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## George Buchanan,

**A**N Excellent *Latin Poet*, Born in a Village, in the Province of *Lennox*, in *Scotland*, *Anno Dom. 1506.* about the beginning of *February*. He died at *Edinburgh*, in the Year 1582. the 28th. day of *December*.

*Buchanan*, a Man born, as he himself hath Written in a *Poem*, *Nec Cælo, nec Solo, nec Seculo erudito*, that is, neither in a *Climate*, nor *Country*, nor *Age* of any Learning; yet, says *Cambden*, happily arriving himself at the Top and Perfection of *Poetical* skill, so as *He* may deservedly be reckon'd *Prince* of the *Poets* of this *Age*. *Cambden's Annals, 1582.*

*Thuanus*, in his most incomparable *History*, tells us, That *Buchanan* had not his Fellow in the *Age* he Liv'd, either in respect of his natural Wit, or of the excellent Talent he had in Writing; which even his Works, which in spite of *envy* or *Malice* will survive as long as the World endures, do sufficiently demonstrate *Thuan. Ad Annum, 1582.*

*Turnebus*, in his *Adversar. lib. 1. cap. 2.* says, he believes, there is no Man in *France*, who has had any thing of Education

Education, or Breeding, but is acquainted with *George Buchanan*, who is not only an Excellent *Poet*, but one who is throughly skill'd in all sorts of Learning.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in *Scaligerana* 1. positively affirms, That *Buchanan*, for *Latin Verse*, excels all the *Poets* in *Europe*.

Father *Vavasser* the *Jesuit*, in his *Remarq. anonym. sur les Reflex. touchant la Poétique*, pag. 66. tells us, That of all the *Poets* who have writ in *Latin*, he knew no Man who was more a Master of his own *Idea's*, nor who could with more ease command his *Style*, and his *Expressions*, than *Buchanan*.

*Dr. Burnet*, in his *Hist. of the Reform.* takes notice, That among Those who were at this time (1541) in hazard; *George Buchanan* was one. The *Clergy* were resolv'd to be reveng'd on him, for the sharpness of the *Poems* he had written against them: And the King had so absolutely left all Mën to their Mercy, that he had died with the rest, if he had not made his escape out of Prison: Then he went beyond Sea, and liv'd twenty Years in that Exile, and was forc'd to teach a School most part of the time; yet the greatness of his Mind, says *Burnet*, was not oppress'd with that mean Employment. In his *Writings* there appears, not only all the Beauty and Graces of the *Latin Tongue*, but a Vigor of Mind and Quickness of Thought, far beyond *Bembo*, or the other *Italians*, who at that time affected to revive the purity of the *Roman Style*. It was but a feeble imitation of *Tully* in them; but his *Style* is so natural and nervous, and his *Reflexions* on Things are so solid, (besides his *Immortal Poems*, in which he shews how well he could imitate all the *Roman Poets*, in their several ways of Writing, that he who compares them, will be often tempted to prefer the Copy to the Original,) that

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he

he is justly reckon'd the Greatest and Best of our Modern Authors. **Burnet's Hist. of the Reform.** Book 3d, pag. 311.

*Borrichius* tells us, That the *Poems* of *George Buchanan*, the *Scotchman*, have through their great variety of Matter, the beauty of their Style, the lustre of their Figures, and an unaffected observance of a *Decorum*, gain'd him the love and praise of almost all Learned Men. It was a high Character, that *Joseph Scaliger* gave of *Buchanan*, in that *Distich* of his :

*Imperii fuerat Romani Scotia finis,  
Romani eloquii Scotia finis erit.*

With how much Devotion, but yet how neatly, does he play upon *David's Harp*? How florid are his *Elegies*? How full of gravity are those *Tragedies* of his, *Jephthé*, and *Baptista*? How splendid are his five Books *De Sphæra Mundi*? How elegant is he in his *Lyricks*, *Miscellanies*, and *Epigrams*? And to conclude, How sharp and Satyrical are his *Franciscanus & Fratres*? **Borrich.** *Dissertat. Academ. de Poetis*, pag. 150.

*Beza*, in a Letter to *Buchanan*, says, It was incredible, the pleasure he took in reading his *Paraphrase* upon *David's Psalms*.

The Learned *Dr. Duport*, in the *Preface* to his *Metaphrasis Psalmorum*, tells us, That *Buchanan* transcended all that ever writ upon this Subject.

*Monsieur Teissier*, in his *Elogies* of the Learned Men which *Thuanus* mentions, says, That the *Paraphrase* of the *Psalms* was *Buchanan's* chief Master-piece; and that which added much to the credit of this Work, was, that he compos'd it at the very time his Mind was overwhelm'd



whelm'd with Grief, to wit, while he was a Prisoner in a Monastery in *Portugal*.

*Grotius*, in his *Epist. V. ad Gallos*, speaking of the *Tragedies* of *Buchanan*, says, That he has not sufficiently kept up the gravity of the *Buskin*; but, in other respects, that he is a very great Man.

*Rapin* remarks, That among the *Modern Poets* that have writ in *Latin* of late days, those who could attain to the *Numbers* and *Cadence* of *Virgil*, in the turn of their Verse, have had most Reputation; And because that *Buchanan*, who otherwise had *Wit*, *Fancy*, and a *pure Style*, perceiv'd not this *Grace*, or neglected it, he has lost much of his Value and Credit: Perhaps nothing was wanting to make him an Accomplish'd Poet, but this perfection, which most certainly is not *Chimerical*: And whoever shall reflect a little on the power of the *Dorian*, *Lydian*, and *Phrygian* *Airs*, whereof *Aristotle* speaks in his *Problems*, and *Athenæus* in his *Banquets*, he must acknowledge, what Vertue there is in *Number* and *Harmony*. *Rap. Reflex. on Arist. Treatise of Poesie, i. part, Sect. 37.*

The same Author tells us, That *Buchanan* has a Character compos'd of many Characters; his Wit is easie, delicate, natural, but not great or lofty. *Rap. ibid. part 2d. Sect. xvi.*

The *Jephthe*, and *Baptista* of *Buchanan*, contain little considerable, except the purity of Style, in which these *Tragedies* are written. *Ibid. Sect. 23.*

*Buchanan*, says *Rapin*, has *Odes* comparable to those of Antiquity; but he hath great *Unevennesses* by the mixture of his Character, which is not *Uniform* enough. *Ibid. Sect. xxx.*

*Buchanan* is noted by the Church of *Rome*, as *Hæreticus primæ Classis*, a Heretick of the first Form.

## Callimachus,

**A**N Excellent Greek Poet of *Cyrene*, in great favour and esteem with *Ptolomæus Philadelphus*, and of his Son *Euergetes*, in honour of whose Queen he wrote his Fiction, call'd *Coma Berenices*. He also wrote *Hymns*, *Elegies*, and *Epigrams*, whereof many of his *Hymns* and *Epigrams*, as also several Fragments of his other Works, are yet extant, and not many Years since published by the Learned *Mademoiselle le Fevre*, with Notes and Remarks full of solid Learning.

This Poet was one of the most Learned Men in his Age, according to the Opinion of *Tanaquillus le Fevre*, and some other *Criticks*: And, it may be, we cannot easily find an Author, who has writ a greater Number of Poems; though they were generally but small Pieces; for the aversion he had to long and tedious Works, made him often say, That a great Book was a great Evil. But herein he did by no means please the *Criticks* of that Age, who commonly thought (but with little reason,) That Poets, like the Sea, should never be dry, and that to Abound was the best Quality of a Writer.

*Mademoiselle le Fevre*, in the Preface to her Edition of *Callimachus*, says, That in all the Writings of the Ancient Greeks, there never was any thing more Elegant, nor more polite, than the Works of *Callimachus*.

And of the same Opinion was her Father, *Tanaquillus*, in his *Abregé des Vies des Poetes Grecs*, pag. 143, 144. who tells us, That the way that *Callimachus* took in Composing his Verses, was both pure and Masculine; that

that *Catullus* and *Propertius* did often imitate him, nay, and that sometimes they stole from him.

In these last Ages, there have been some *Criticks*, who would by no means allow, that *Callimachus* ever had any great *Genius* for *Poetry*; and amongst others, we find *Ger. Job. Vossius* of this mind, in his *De Arte Poeticâ*, pag. 27. and also pag. 67. It is very probable, they might ground this their Opinion upon that *Distich* of *Ovid* :

\* *Battiades toto semper cantabitur Orbe,* \* *Callimachus.*  
*Quamvis ingenio non valet, Arte valet.*

So that upon the faith of *Ovid*, they have given it for granted, That this Poet does rather abound with *Art* and *Labour*, than with *Wit* or *Spirit*. But *Daniel Heinsius*, in his Preface before *Hesiod*, Printed 1603. explaining this place of *Ovid*, tells us, That when this Author seems to accuse *Callimachus*, for not having had a *Genius*; his meaning is not, that he wanted *Invention*, *Subtlety*, *Address*, or *Wit*; but only, that He is not *Natural* enough, that he is too elaborate, and has too much of affectation, as if he thought it more honour to be a good *Gramarian*, than to be a true Poet. And hence (without doubt) it was, That *Candidus Hefychius*, a late Author with that fictitious Name, in his Book Entitled *Godellus utrum Poeta*, cap. 2. pag. 75. saith, That *Callimachus*, finding that the *Wind* did not favour him, never durst venture into the open *Sea*, but always kept near the *Shore*; that so he might the more easily get into *Harbour*; that is to say, He wanting a *Poetical Genius*, and that *Enthusiasm* which elevates *Poets*, he never car'd to undertake a *Work* of too great a length.

Not only *Quintilian*, in his *Institut. Oratoriar. lib. x. cap. 1.* but also *Philippus Beroaldus*, in his Comment upon *Propertius*, as likewise *Ger. Joh. Vossius*, in his *Institut. Poetic. lib. 3. pag. 51.* do severally conclude, and agree, That *Callimachus* pass'd among the *Greeks* for their best, and chiefest Writer of *Elezies*.

Though *Callimachus* was generally esteem'd a very good *Grammarian*, yet *Joseph Scaliger*, in *Scaligerana* 2. pag. 187. says, That he affected the most obscure, Antique, and improper Words, in many of his *Poems*.

*Joannes Fonsus*, in his *De Scriptoribus Historiæ Philoſophicæ, lib. 11. cap. v.* affirms, That *Callimachus* was a most Excellent *Critick*; and that we cannot sufficiently deplore the loss of those many Pieces he Wrote, in relation to that sort of Learning.

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## *Caius Valerius Catullus,*

A Writer of *Epigrams*. He was Born at *Verona* about the end of the Second Year of the 173. *Olympiad*, Eighty Six Years before *Christ*. He died in the Thirtieth Year of his Age, and in the Fourth Year of the 180. *Olympiad*, the very Year that *Cicero* return'd from his *Exile*.

*Petrus Crinitus*, in his *De Poëtis Latinis*, tells us, That *Catullus* had so great a reputation for Learning, that even by the general consent of the Learned, the *Epithet* of *Doctus* was affixed to his Name. *Ovid* thought, that, for Majesty and loftiness of Verse, *Catullus* was no way inferior to *Virgil* himself. And 'tis certain, says *Crinitus*,  
that

that notwithstanding both the *Plinys* have condemn'd *Catullus's* Verse, as harsh and unpleasant, yet he has generally been accounted a most Elegant Poet, and has had several who have copy'd after him.

*Petrus Victorius*, lib. 22. cap. xv. *Variarum Lectionum*, says, That 'tis impossible any thing can be more Witty, more Learned, or more Pleasant, than *Catullus*; not to meddle with the purity of his Stile, wherein he Transcends almost all others.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in *Scaligerana* 1. remarks, that *Catullus* was too Critical, and too strict an observer of the Roman Elegancies.

*Turnebus*, lib. 12. *Adversar. cap. 1.* styles *Catullus* The Sweetest, and most Polite, of all the Poets.

*Paulus Manutius*, in his Third Book, and Fourteenth Epist. to *Muretus*, gives *Catullus* the preference before *Tibullus*, or *Propertius*, in the Elegancy of Stile, and in curious, neat Sentences.

*Ovid* calls *Catullus*, a Learned, Eloquent, and Witty, but withall an Obscene Poet.

*Martial* had so high an Opinion of *Catullus*, that we find he compares him even to *Virgil*:

*Tantum magna suo debet Verona Catullo,*

*Quantum parva suo Mantua Virgilio.*

*Mart. lib. 14. Epigr. 195.*

*Borrichius*, in his *Dissert. Acad. De Poëtis*, pag. 49. says, That *Catullus* was much in *Cicero's* favour, and that he was a very sweet Poet; and if at any time he appears hard or rough, especially in his *Epicks*, yet he has made sufficiently amends by his wonderful pleasant Wit, and by his pure Elegancy in the Roman Language.

*He*

He also adds, that 'tis pity his *Wit* was not better employ'd.

*Caspar Barthius*, lib. 38. cap. 7. *Adversar.* tells us, That *Catullus's* Contemporaries, gave him the Title of *Learned*, for no other reason, but only because, he was the first that knew how to Translate into *Latin Verse*, whatsoever was most Beautiful and Delicate in the *Greek Poets*; which, before him, was thought impossible to be done.

*Julius Scaliger*, in his *De Poëtica*, p. 865. says, That he ne're could find in any Author, nor for his heart can he imagine the reason, why the *Ancients* gave *Catullus* the Title of *Learned*; since He does not see there is any thing in his Books, but what is common and ordinary. He says, his *Stile* is generally very hard and unpolish'd; though indeed, sometimes it flows like Water, and has no strength; that he is often so very immodest, that it puts him out of Countenance; and, that sometimes he is so very languid and faint, that he cannot but pity him; and, to Conclude, that he is often under such difficulty, and constraint, that he is mightily troubled and concern'd for him.

*Rapin* remarks, That *Catullus* in his *Elegies* has too much *Softness*, and a *Negligence* too affected.

The *Beauty* of an *Epigram*, says *Rapin*, consists either in the delicate turn, or in a lucky word. The *Greeks* have understood this sort of *Poesie* otherwise than the *Latins*. The *Greek Epigram* runs upon the turn of a Thought that is Natural, but fine and subtle. The *Latin Epigram*, by a false taste that sway'd in the beginning of the decay of the *Latin Tongue*, endeavours to surprize the Mind by some nipping Word, which is call'd a *Point*. *Catullus* Writ after the former manner, which is of a finer Character; for he endeavours to close a natural Thought within a delicate

delicate *turn* of Words, and within the simplicity of a very soft Expression.

*Martial* was in some manner the Author of this other way, that is to say, to terminate an ordinary Thought by some *Word* that is *surprizing*. After all, Men of a good Taste, says *Rapin*, preferr'd the way of *Catullus*, before that of *Martial*; there being more of *true delicacy* in *that*, than in *this*. And in these latter Ages, we have seen a Noble *Venetian*, named *Andreas Naugerius*, who had an exquisite discernment, and who, by a natural *Antipathy* against all that which is called *Point*, which he judged to be of an ill relish, sacrific'd every Year, in Ceremony, a Volume of *Martial's Epigrams*, to the *Manes* of *Catullus*, in Honour to his Character, which he judg'd was to be preferr'd to that of *Martial*. *Rapin's Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie, part 2. Sect. 29, and 31.*

*Gerardus Johannes Vossius* observes, That the roughness, or unevenness in *Catullus's Verse*, so much taken notice of by the best *Criticks*, proceeds chiefly from his too frequent use of the Figures, *Ethlipsis*, and *Synalepha*. *Lib. 3. Institutionum Poeticarum, pag. 56.*

## Geoffry Chaucer.

THREE several Places contend for the Birth of this Famous Poet. First, *Berkshire*, from the words of *Leland*, that he was born in *Barocensi Provinciâ*; and Mr. *Cambden* affirms, that *Dunington-Castle*, nigh unto

G

Newbury,

*Newbury*, was Anciently his Inheritance. *Secondly*, *Oxfordshire*, where, *John Pits* is positive, that his Father (who was a Knight) liv'd, and that he was born at *Woodstock*. *Thirdly*, The Author of his Life, Printed 1602. Supposes him to be born at *London*. But though the place of his Birth is not certainly known, yet this is agreed upon by all hands, that he was counted the chief of the *English Poets*, not only of his time, but continued to be so esteem'd till this Age; and as much as we despise his old fashion'd Phrase, and Obsolete Words, *He* was one of the first Refiners of the *English Language*.

Of how great esteem he was in the Age wherein he flourish'd, viz. the Reigns of *Henry* the IV. *Henry* the V. and part of *Henry* the VI. appears, besides his being Knighted, and made *Poet Laureate* by the Honour he had to be ally'd by Marriage to the great Earl of *Lancaster*, *John* of *Gaunt*.

We have several of his Works yet extant, but his *Squires Tale*, and some other of his Pieces are not to be found.

*John Pits*, in his *De Illustribus Angliæ Scriptoribus*, says, That *Chaucer* so illustrated the *English Poetry*, that he may justly be esteem'd our *English Homer*.

*He* likewise tells us, that he was an Excellent *Rhetorician*, a skillful *Mathematician*, an acute *Philosopher*, and no contemptible *Divine*.

*Winstanley*, in the *Lives* of the *English Poets*, compares *Chaucer* for the sweetness of his *Poetry*, to *Stesichorus*; And (saith he) as *Cerbegus* was call'd *Suadæ Medulla*, so may *Chaucer* be rightly call'd the Pith and Sinews of Eloquence, and the very life it self of all Mirth and pleasant Writing. Besides, one gift he had above other Authors, says *Winstanley*, and that is, by the Excellencies  
of



of his Descriptions, to possess his Readers with a stronger Imagination of seeing that done before their Eyes which they Read, than any other that ever Writ in any Tongue.

But above all, *He tells us, Chaucer's Canterbury-Tales*, is most valu'd and esteem'd of.

The Learned and Ingenious Mr. *Roger Ascham* calls *Chaucer*, *The English Homer*; adding also, That he values his Authority equal to that of *Sophocles* or *Euripiðes* in Greek.

Sir *Philip Sidney*, in his *Defence of Poësie*, gives him this Character; *Chaucer undoubtedly did excellently in his Troilus and Crescid, of whom truly I know not whether to marvel more, either that He in that misty time could see so clearly, or We in this clear Age walk so stumblingly after him.*

This agrees with the following Verses, made by Sir *John Denham*:

*Old Chaucer, like the Morning Star,  
To us discovers Day from far;  
His light those Mists and Clouds dissolv'd,  
Which our dark Nation long involv'd;  
But he descending to the Shades,  
Darkness again the Age invades.*

*J. Denham. The 3d. Edit. 1684. pag. 89.*

Sir *Henry Savil*, in his *Preface to Bradwardin's Book* against *Pelagius*, says, that *Chaucer* was the chief of our *English Poets*, and that he had a sharp Judgment, and a pleasant Wit; and that he was also well skill'd both in *Philosophy* and *Divinity*.

Sir *Richard Baker*, in the *Reign of Edward the Third*, styles Sir *Geoffry Chaucer*, the *Homer* of our Nation; adding,

That *he* found as sweet a Muse in the Groves of *Woodstock*, as the *Ancients* did upon the Banks of *Helicon*.

*Cambden* also, in his *Britannia*, tells us, That it is the only thing the Town of *Woodstock* hath to brag of, That *he* gave Birth to *Geoffrey Chaucer*, our *English Homer*; of whom, in his Opinion, may truly be said, that which an *Italian Poet* once apply'd to *Homer*:

—— *Hic ille est, cujus de gurgite Sacro  
Combibit arcanos vaturn omnis turba furores.*

*Dr. Sprat*, in his *History of the Royal Society*, pag. 42. says, That till the time of King *Henry the Eighth*, there was scarce any man regarded the *English Language*, but *Chaucer*; and that nothing was Written in it, which one would be willing to read twice, but some of *his Poetry*; But that then it began to raise it self a little, and to sound tolerably well.

Tho' *Verstegan* commends *Chaucer*, as an excellent Poet for his time; yet he wholly differs from those, who are of opinion, that *he* did so mightily refine the *English Language*. Indeed, he rather condemns *Chaucer* for adulterating the *English Tongue*, by the mixture of so many *French* and *Latin Words*.

This our *Poet*, lies buried in *Westminster Abby*, with the following Inscription:

*Qui fuit Anglorum vates ter maximus olim,  
Galfridus Chaucer, conditur hoc Tumulo.  
Annum si quæras Domini, si tempora Mortis,  
Ecce notæ subsunt, quæ tibi cuncta notant;  
25 Octobris 1400.*

*Ærumnarum requies Mors.*

*Nicolaus Brigham* hos fecit Musarum nomine sumptus.  
*Claudius*

## Claudius Claudianus,

**B**ORN at *Alexandria* in *Egypt*; he flourish'd in the time of *Theodosius* the Great, and his Children, *Christian* Emperours, tho' he himself continued an *Obstinate Heathen*; however, for his eminency in *Latin* Poetry (whereof his *Proserpina's Rape*, and several other *Poems* yet extant, are a Testimony;) he had his *Statue* erected by *Arcadius* and *Honorius*. And in that Inscription, which was set upon his *Statue*, he is called *Prægloriosissimus Poetaram*.

*Petrus Crinitus*, lib. v. *De Poetis Latinis*, cap. 85. says, That *Claudian* was of an Excellent *Genius*, very much adapted to *Poetry*; that he is very happy in his *Flights*, and takes such a wonderful delight in the variety of *Figures* and *Sentences*, that he seems by *Nature* to have been design'd for a *Poet*.

*Joannes Ludovicus Vives*, in his Comment upon *St. Austin's* Fifth Book *De Civitate Dei*, cap. 25. tells us, That *Claudian* was born to *Poetry*; that he was both *Elegant*, and *Witty*, and of a true *Poetical Genius*, but inclining to *Superstition*; and that, as for his Poem *De Christo*, he verily believes, he wrote it only to please *Honorius*, so great a *Sycophant* was *Claudian*.

*Julius Cæsar Scaliger*, lib. 6. cap. 5. *De re Poeticâ*, says, That *Claudian* was a very great *Poet*; and that though he did not treat of the noblest sort of Subjects, yet what was wanting that way, he would be sure to supply with his *Wit*. He adds, That he was a *Poet* of a right happy *Vein*, that he had a solid judgment, that his *Style* was pure, easie, and natural, and that he had

had a great deal of smartness, without the least affectation.

*Lilius Gregorius Gyraldus* tells us, That he did not much dislike *Claudian's* Verses, tho' there were some who did, upon the account of their having no variety; but always falling into the same *Cadence*. But, says *Gyraldus*, if there be any that approve of his Verses, let them do so, with all my heart; yet he is sure, *Claudian* flags in the *Invention*; for tho' at his first setting out, he seems to be full of Fire, and very brisk, yet all of a sudden he stops, like a Man out of breath, and his Conclusion is never answerable to his Beginning. However, as *Piso* said, *Claudian* is a quick, ready Poet, and there is in him a great deal of Musick and Sweetness: But yet the truth of it is, he is not fit to be Copy'd after; Though, as *Gyraldus* observes, there are *Flowers* in him, which if a Wise Man have the gathering, would be of wonderful advantage.

*George Buchanan*, in his Dialogue, *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*, styles *Claudian*, a Poet of an Excellent Wit, and of very great Learning.

*Eustatius Swartius*, *lib. 1. Analectorum, cap. xiii.* says, That *Claudian* was a Poet worthy of the highest Commendation; and that tho' his Wit and Eloquence happened to be in a Vicious Age; yet, since *Augustus's* Reign, no Man went beyond him, either in purity of Style, or loftiness of Expression.

But *Honoratus Faber*, *lib. 3. Euphyandri, cap. 2.* tells us, Though his Style be natural, soft, and sweet, yet that his *Latin* is not so very pure, as some would persuade us.

*Borrichius*, in his *Dissertat. Acad. De Poetis, pag. 73.* observes to us, That even at this day *Claudian's* Verses are read with great Veneration, in respect of his profound

found Wit; *that* his *Style* is chaste, grave, and sublimes; and yet, which is a thing to be admir'd, easie and natural, interwoven with *Moral* and *Political* Instructions; but, to speak the truth, his *Style* is now and then a little too haughty, and he is too full of the *Sallies* of *Youth*, which yet in *Virgil* no Man ever had just reason to find fault with.

*Rapin* remarks, That *Claudian* hath Wit and Fancy; but no taste for that delicacy of the *Numbers*, and that turn of the Verse, which the Skillful admire in *Virgil*; that he falls perpetually into the same *Cadence*; and, for that cause, one can hardly read him without being wearied; And that he has no *Elevation* in any kind. *Rap. Reflex. on Arist. Treatise of Poesie, part 2d. sect. xv.*

The same Author tells us, That the Common Undertakers, in *Panegyricks*, who have not force to form handsomely a Design, loose the Reins to their Fancy; and after they have pil'd a heap of gross and deform'd *Praises*, without Order or Connexion, one upon another, *This*, forsooth, must be call'd a *Panegyrick*. 'Tis thus, says *Rapin*, that *Claudian* has *Prais'd* the Emperour *Honorius*, and the Consuls, *Probinus*, *Olyorius*, *Stilicon*, and the other Illustrious Persons of his time. Throughout all his *Panegyricks* reigns an *Air* of *Youthfulness*, says *Rapin*, that has nothing of what is *Solid*, though there appears some Wit. *Rap. ibid. sect. xiv.*

*Joseph Scaliger*, in *Scaligerana poster. pag. 51.* calls *Claudian* a most Elegant Poet; adding, That he has a great many fine things in his *Panegyrick* upon the fourth *Consulship* of *Honorius*.

*Joannes Cuspinianus*, in *Commentario, ad annum Urbis MCLII.* says, That *Claudian* writ a most Elegant *Panegyrick* upon this fourth *Consulship* of *Honorius*; which,  
says

says he, if a Man reads carefully, it may save him the reading the several Histories of those times; for that one may *there* find all the remarkable Occurrences, that had then happen'd: To conclude, *he says*, That *Claudian* was a Man of *Universal* Learning.

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## Abraham Cowley,

**W**As born in *Fleetstreet*, near to the end of *Chancery-Lane*, in the Parish of *St. Dunstan* in the West, *London*, Anno 1618. His Father, who was a *Grocer*, dying before the Son was born, the Mother, by her Endeavours and Friends, got him into *Westminster* School, as a King's Scholar; where, in the Year 1633, then going into the Sixteenth Year of his Age, he Compos'd a Book, called *Poetical Blossoms*; whereby the great pregnancy of his Parts was discover'd: Soon after having obtain'd the *Greek* and *Roman* Languages, he was remov'd to *Trinity-Colledge* in *Cambridge*, where most of his Works were writ, or at least design'd.

Dr. *Sprat* says, That of the several Works published by Mr. *Cowley*, it is hard to give one general Character, because of the difference of their Subjects; and the various forms and distant times of their Writing. Yet, *says he*, this is true of them all, That, in all the several shapes of his *Style*, there is still very much of the likeness and impression of the same Mind: The same unaffected Modesty, and natural freedom, and easie vigour, and chearful passions, and innocent mirth, which appear'd in all his Manners. We have many things  
that

that he writ in two very *unlike* Conditions, in the *University* and the *Court*. But in his *Poetry*, as well as his life, he mingled with Excellent Skill what was good in *both* States. In his *Life* he joyn'd the innocence and sincerity of the *Scholar*, with the humanity and good behaviour of the *Courtier*. In his *Poems* he united the Solidity and Art of the *One*, with the Gentility and Gracefulness of the *Other*.

If any shall think, that he was not wonderfully curious in the choice and elegance of all his Words: I will affirm, says *Sprat*, with more truth on the other side, That he had no manner of affectation in them: He took them as he found them made to his hands; he neither went before, nor came after the use of the Age. He forsook the Conversation, but never the Language, of the *City* and *Court*. He understood exceeding well, all the variety and power of *Poetical Numbers*; and practis'd all sorts with great happiness. If his Verses in some places seem not as soft and flowing as some would have them, it was his *choice* not his *fault*. He knew that in diverting Mens Minds, there should be the same variety observ'd, as in the prospects of their Eyes: Where a Rock, a Precipice, or a rising Wave, is often more delightful than a smooth, even Ground, or a Calm Sea. Where the Matter required it, he was as gentle as any Man. But where higher Vertues were chiefly to be regarded, an *exact Numerosity* was not then his main Care. This (says *Sprat*) may serve to answer those who upbraid some of his Pieces with *roughness*, and with more *Contraction* than they are willing to allow. But these Admirers of *Gentleness* without *Sinews*, should know that different Arguments must have different Colours of Speech: That there is a kind of variety of *Sexes* in *Poetry*, as well as in *Mankind*: That as

the peculiar Excellence of the *Feminine Kind*, is *smoothness* and *beauty*; So *Strength* is the chief Praise of the *Masculine*.

*He* had a perfect Mastery in both the Languages in which he writ: But each of them kept a just distance from the other; neither did his *Latin* make his *English* too old, nor his *English* make his *Latin* too Modern. *He* excell'd both in *Prose* and *Verse*; and *both* together have that perfection, which is commended by some of the *Ancients*, above all others, that they are very obvious to the Conception, but most difficult in the imitation.

His *Fancy* flow'd with great speed, and therefore it was very fortunate to him, that his *Judgment* was equal to manage it. *He* never runs his Reader, nor his Argument, out of breath. *He* perfectly practises the hardest Secret of good Writing, to know when he has done enough. *He* always leaves off in such a manner, that it appears it was in his power to have said much more. In the particular Expressions there is still much to be applauded, but more in the Disposition, and order of the whole. From thence there springs a new Comeliness, besides the feature of each part. His Invention is powerful, and large as can be desir'd. But it seems all to arise out of the Nature of the Subject, and to be just fitted for the thing of which he speaks. If ever he goes far for it, he dissembles his pains admirably well.

The *Variety* of *Arguments* that he has manag'd, is so large, that there is scarce any particular of all the *Passions* of Men, or *Works* of *Nature*, and *Providence*, which he has pass'd by undescrib'd. Yet, (says *Sprat*) he still observes the Rules of Decency, with so much care, that whether he inflames his Reader with the softer Affections,



ons, or delights him with inoffensive Raillery, or teaches the familiar Manners of Life, or adorns the Discoveries of Philosophy, or inspires him with the Heroick Characters of Charity and Religion; To *all these* Matters, that are so wide asunder, says *Sprat*, he still proportions a due Figure of Speech, and a proper Measure of Wit. This indeed is most remarkable, that a Man who was so constant and fix'd in the *Moral Ideas* of his Mind, should yet be so changeable in his *Intellectual*, and in *both* to the highest degree of Excellence.

In his *Latin Poems*, says Dr. *Sprat*, he has express'd to admiration, all the *Numbers* of Verses, and *Figures* of *Poesie*, that are scatter'd up and down among the *Ancients*. There is hardly to be found in them all, any good fashion of Speech, or colour of Measure, but *he* has comprehended it, and given instances of it, according as his several Arguments requir'd either a *Majestick* Spirit, or a *Passionate*, or a *Pleasant*. This is the more extraordinary, in that it was never yet perform'd by any *Single Poet* of the *Ancient Romans* themselves. *They* had the Language natural to them, and so might easily have moulded it into what Form or Humour they pleas'd: Yet it was their constant Custome, to confine all their Thoughts and practice to one or two ways of Writing, as despairing ever to compass all together. This is evident in those that excell'd in *Odes* and *Songs*, in the *Comical*, *Tragical*, *Epical*, *Elegiacal*, or *Satyrical* way. And this perhaps occasion'd the first distinction and Number of the *Muses*. For they thought the Task too hard for any one of them, though they fancied them to be *Goddeesses*. And therefore they divided it amongst them all, and only recommended to each of them, the care of a distant Character of *Poetry* and *Musick*.  
**Sprat's Account of the Life of Mr. Abraham Cowley.**

The Character that Sir John Denham gave of *Abraham Cowley*, you may take in these his following Verses:

*Old Mother Wit, and Nature gave  
Shakespear and Fletcher all they have;  
In Spencer, and in Johnson, Art  
Of slower Nature got the Start;  
But both in him so equal are;  
None knows which bears the happi'st share;  
To him no Author was unknown,  
Yet what he wrote was all his own;  
He melted not the ancient Gold,  
Nor with Ben. Johnson did make bold  
To plunder all the Roman Stores  
Of Poets, and of Orators:  
Horace his Wit, and Virgil's State  
He did not steal, but emulate;  
And when he would like them appear,  
Their Garb, but not their Cloaths, did wear.*

**Denham's** Poems, pag. 90, 91. of the 3d Edition.

*Rimer* tells us, That a more happy Genius for *Heroick Poefie* appears in *Cowley*, than either in *Spencer*, or *D'avenant*. He understood the purity, the perspicuity, the majesty of *Stile*, and the Vertue of *Numbers*. He could discern what was beautiful and pleasant in *Nature*, and could exprefs his Thoughts without the least difficulty or constraint. He understood how to dispose of the Matters, and to manage his Digressions. In short, he understood *Homer* and *Virgil*, and as prudently made his advantage of them. Yet as it may be lamented, that he carried not on the Work so far as he design'd,

so

so it might be wish'd that he had liv'd to Revise what he did leave us: I think, says *Rimer*, the *Troubles* of *David* is neither Title nor Matter proper for an *Heroick* Poem; seeing it is rather the *Actions*, than his *Sufferings*, that make an *Heroe*: Nor can it be defended by *Homer's Odysses*, since *Ulysses's* Sufferings conclude with one great and perfect Action.

But notwithstanding this *Censure* of Mr. *Rimer*, he afterwards tells us, That in *Cowley's Davideis* (Fragment and imperfect as it is) there shines something of a more fine, more free, more new, and more noble *Air*, than appears in the *Hierusalem* of *Tasso*, which, for all his Care, is scarce perfectly purg'd from *Pedantry*.

And after all, says *Rimer*, in the *Lyrick* way *Cowley* far exceeds *Tasso*, and all the rest of the *Italians*. See *Rimer's Pref.* to his *Translat.* of *Rapin*.

*Samuel Woodford*, in the *Preface* to his *Paraphrase* upon the *Psalms*, remarks, That in *Cowley's Davideis* there is to be found, as much as could be expected for the first sitting, whatever is requisite to make an *Heroick* Poem beautiful: Sound Judgment, happy Invention, graceful Disposition, unaffected Facility, strict Observance of Decencies, and all set off with that Majesty and Sweetness of Verse, that it is to be lamented he had not an Opportunity before his Death, to finish it according to his own Model, and the Provision he had laid up to that purpose. And truly (says *Woodford*) all his Divine Poems, have I know not what greatness of Spirit, which you shall seldom meet with elsewhere, and in which generally he has as much out-done himself, as in the rest equal'd the most happy of our *Modern Poets*.

The occasion of Mr. *Cowley's* falling on the *Pindarique* way of Writing, was (as Dr. *Sprat* informs us,) his  
accidental

accidental meeting with *Pindar's Works*, in a place where he had no other Books to direct him: Having then consider'd at leisure the height of his Invention, and the Majesty of his *Style*, he try'd immediately to imitate it in *English*. And he perform'd it, says *Sprat*, without the danger that *Horace* prelag'd to the Man who should dare to attempt it.

How well *Cowley* succeeded in imitating the great *Pindar*, according to the opinion of Mr. *Flatman*, appears by his *Pindarique Ode* on *Samuel Woodford's Version* of the *Psalms*:

*Bold man, that dares attempt Pindariqu' now,  
 Since the great Pindar's greatest Son  
 From the ungrateful Age is gon;  
 Cowley has bid th' ungrateful Age Adieu!  
 Apollo's rare Columbus, He  
 Found out new Worlds of Poetry;  
 He, like an Eagle, soar'd aloft,  
 To seize his noble prey;  
 Tet as a Dove's, his Soul was soft,  
 Quiet as Night, but bright as Day:  
 To Heaven in a fiery Chariot He  
 Ascended by Seraphick Poetry;  
 Tet which of us dull Mortals since can find  
 Any Inspiring Mantle, that He left behind?*  
*Thomas Flatman.*

*Dryden* tells us, That Mr. *Cowley*, indeed, has brought *Pindarique Verse* as near Perfection as was possible, in so short a time. But (*says he*) if I may be allow'd to speak my mind modestly, and without injury to his Sacred Ashes, somewhat of the purity of *English*, somewhat of more equal Thoughts, somewhat of sweetness in the  
*Numbers,*

*Numbers*, in one word, somewhat of a finer *turn* and more *Lyrical Verse* is yet wanting. As for the Soul of it, which consists in the Warmth and Vigour of Fancy, the Masterly Figures, and the Copiousness of Imagination, *he* has excell'd all others in this kind. Yet, if the Kind it self be capable of more Perfection, tho' rather in the *Ornamental* parts of it, than the *Essential*, what Rules of Morality or Respect (*says Dryden*) have I broken, in naming the Defects, that they may hereafter be amended? *Imitation* is a nice Point, and there are few *Poets* who deserve to be *Models* in all they Write. *Dryd.* Pref. to the 2d. Part of Poetical Miscellanies.

The Earl of *Mulgrave*, speaking of the Nature of *Pindarique Odes*, tells us :

*The Poet here must be indeed Inspir'd  
With Fury too, as well as Fancy fir'd.  
Cowley might boast to have perform'd this part,  
Had he with Nature join'd the Rules of Art;  
But ill Expression gives sometimes Allay  
To that rich Fancy, which can ne're decay.*

*Mulg.* Essay on Poetry.

This Great Man, *Abraham Cowley*, lies buried in *Westminster Abby*, near two of our most Eminent *English Poets*, *Chaucer* and *Spencer*, with this Inscription :

ABRAHAMUS COWLEIUS,  
Anglorum Pindarus, Flaccus, Maro,  
Deliciæ, Decus, Desiderium Ævi sui,  
Hic juxta situs est.  
Aurea dum volitant late tua Scripta per Orbem  
Et Famâ æternum vivis Divine Poeta,

*Hic*

*Hic placidâ jaceas requie, custodiat Urnam  
 Cana fides vigilantq; perenni Lampade Musæ;  
 Sit sacer iste Locus, nec quis temerarius ausit  
 Sacrilegâ turbare manu Venerable Bustum.  
 Intacti maneant, maneant per secula Dulcis  
 Couleii Cineres, servantq; immobile Saxum.*

*Sic vovet,*

*Votumque suum apud Posterios sacratum esse voluit,  
 Qui viro Incomparabili posuit Sepulchrale marmor:*

GEORGIUS DUX BUCKINGHAMIÆ.

*Excessit è Vitâ Anno Ætatis 49. & honorificâ pompâ  
 elatus ex Ædibus Buckinghamianis, viris Illustri-  
 bus omnium Ordinum exsequias celebrantibus,  
 Sepultus est Die 3<sup>o</sup> Mensis Augusti, Anno Dom. 1667.*

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## *Dantes Aligerus.*

**A** Most Renowned *Florentine*, and the first of *Italian* Poets of any Fame or Note. He was born in the Year 1265. He dyed at *Ravanna* in the Year 1321. That which most proclaims his Fame to the World, is his Triple Poem, Entitled, *Paradise, Purgatory, and Hell*; besides which he has Wrote several Things in Prose. In his *Opusculum de Monarchia* he held, That the *Civil Government* had no dependance upon the *Church*; for which reason, after his Death, he was Condemn'd as an *Here-tick*, and the said Book was Prohibited by the Church of *Rome*.

*Gisbertus*

*Gisbertus Voetius*, in the Second Book, the First Section, and the Ninth Chapter of his *Bibliotheca*, says, That those *Italian Poems* of *Petrarcha* and *Aligerus*, which do now and then touch upon *Ecclesiastical Matters*, are preferr'd by *Divines* before any of the Works of the other Poets.

*Olearius*, in his *Abacus Patrologicus*, calls *Aligerus*, a Man of very great Credit and Authority, who by his Learning had got the Love and Esteem of all men; and that he was so great an *Affirter* of *Truth*, that he often laid open the *frauds* of the Church of *Rome*.

*Johannes Villani*, both his Countrey-Man and Contemporary, in the Ninth Book of his *Florentine History*, affirms, That *Aligerus* exceeded all that went before him, either in *Verse* or in *Prose*, both for Nobleness of Fancy, and a Majestick Style.

*Boccace*, in his *De Casibus virorum Illustrium*, calls *Dantes Aligerus*, an excellent Poet.

*Cælius Rhodiginus*, lib. 15. cap. 20. *Lectio num Antiquarum*, styles him a Poet not contemptible.

*Platina*, in the Life of *Boniface VIII.* says, That *Dantes Aldegexius* was a Man of very great Learning, and an excellent *Italian Poet*.

*Lilius Gyraldus*, remarks, That in *Aligerus*, one might find both Learning and great Knowledge, and that he was particularly skill'd in the *Parisian Divinity*; but that he is sometimes too sharp and biting. He farther tells us, That many think him too negligent in point of Order and Method, and also as to his Style; but that one *Joannes Stephanus*, a *Hermite*, a Person of great Learning, and one who from his Childhood had a mighty affection for *Aligerus*, was wont to refute those persons, by giving a full Answer to their Objections.

*Rapin* tells us, That *Dantes Aligerus* wants fire, and that he has not heat enough. *Rap. Reflex. on Arist. Treatise of Poesie, part 1. sect. 2.*

*He* also observes to us, That his Thoughts are so *Profound*, that much Art is requir'd to dive into them. *Ibid. sect. xxvii.*

And, to conclude, *he says*, That his Triple Poem of *Paradise, Purgatory, and Hell*, (which the *Italians* of those days, call'd a *Comedy*, but passes for an *Epick* Poem in the Opinion of *Castelvetro*) is of a sad and woful contrivance; and that speaking generally, *Dante* has a strain too *Profound*, to deserve the name of an *Heroick Poet*. *Rap. Ibid. part 2. sect. xvi.*

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## Sir William Davenant,

**W**AS born in the City of *Oxford*, in the Parish of *St. Martins*, commonly call'd *Carfax*, near the end of *February* in the Year 1605. He was Poet Laureat to King *Charles* the first, and King *Charles* the Second. He dyed on the Seventh day of *April*, 1668. Aged 63. and was buried amongst the *Poets* in *Westminster Abby*, near to his old Antagonist, and Rival for the Bays, Mr. *Thomas May*: 'Twas observ'd, that at his Funeral his Coffin wanted the Ornament of his Laureats-Crown, which by the Law of *Heraldry* justly appertain'd to him: But this omission (says *Gerard Langbaine*) is sufficiently recompenc'd by an *Eternal Fame*, which will always accompany his Memory; He having been the first Introducer of all that is Splendid in our *English Opera's*,  
and



and 'tis by his means and industry, that our Stage at present Rivals the *Italian* Theatre.

His Works were all Printed together in a Large Folio, *London* 1673. and Dedicated by his Widow to his Royal Highness, the late King *James*.

*Dryden*, in his Preface to the *Tempest*, says, That in the Time he Writ with Sir *William D'avenant*, he had the opportunity to observe somewhat more nearly of him, than he had formerly done, when he had only a bare acquaintance with him; *That* he found him then of so quick a Fancy, that nothing was propos'd to him, on which he could not suddenly produce a Thought extreamly pleasant and surprizing; and that those first Thoughts of his, contrary to the old *Latin* Proverb, *were not always the least happy*; and *that* as his Fancy was quick, so likewise were the Products of it remote and new; *that* he borrow'd not of any other; and *that* his Imitations were such, as could not easily enter into any other Man; *that* his Corrections were sober and judicious; and *that* he Corrected his own Writings much more severely, than those of another Man, bestowing twice the Labour and time in Polishing, which he us'd in Invention.

*Antonius à Wood*, in his *Athenæ Oxonienses*, page 292. calls *D'avenant*, *The sweet Swan of Isis*. He says, That though he wanted much of University Learning (his *Genius* being always opposite to *Logick*;) yet he made as high and noble Flights in the *Poetical* Faculty, as *Fancy* could advance, without it.

*Winstanley*, in his *Lives of the English Poets*, tells us, That Sir *William D'avenant* may be accounted one of the Chiefest of *Apollo's* Sons, for the great fluency of his Wit and Fancy; especially his *Gondibert*, the Crown of all his other Writings.

Mr. *Habbs*, in his Preface to *D'avenant's Gondibert*, is of the Opinion, That it is the best of *Heroick Poems*, either *Ancient* or *Modern*.

How high an Opinion also Mr. *Cowley* had of *this Work*, appears by these following Lines of *his*:

*Metbinks Heroick Poesie till now  
Like some Fantastick Fairy-Land did show,  
Gods, Devils, Nymphs, Witches, and Gyants Race,  
And all but Man, in Man's chief Work and Place.  
Thou like some worthy Knight with Sacred Arms  
Dost drive the Monsters thence, and end the Charms.  
Instead of those dost Men and Manners plant,  
The things which that Rich Soil did chiefly Want.  
Yet ev'enthy Mortals do their Gods excel,  
Taught bythy Muse to Fight and Love so well.  
By fatal Hands whilst present Empires fall,  
Thine from the Grave past Monarchies recall.  
So much more thanks from Humane Kind does merit  
The Poet's Fury, than the Zealot's Spirit.  
And from the Grave thou mak'st this Empire rise,  
Not like some dreadful Ghost t'affright our Eyes,  
But with more Lustre and Triumphant State,  
Than when it Crown'd at proud Verona sate.*

**Abz. Cowley**, upon *D'avenant's Gondibert*:

*Dryden* says, That, as for *Heroick Plays*, the first light we had of them on the *English Theatre*, was from the late *Sir William D'avenant*: It being forbidden him in the *Rebellious times* to Act *Tragedies* and *Comedies*, because they contain'd some matter of Scandal to those good People, who could more easily Dispossess their *Lawful Sovereign*, than endure a *Wanton Jest*; he was forc'd to turn his Thoughts another way; and to introduce the Examples

of

of *Moral Vertue*, writ in Verse, and perform'd in *Recitative Musick*.

The Original of this *Musick*, and of the *Scenes* which adorn'd his Work, he had from the *Italian Opera's*: But he heighten'd his Characters (as I may probably imagine, says *Dryden*) from the Example of *Corneille*, and some *French Poets*. In this Condition did this part of *Poetry* remain at his *Majesties* Return. When growing bolder, as being now own'd by a Publick Authority, *D'avenant* review'd his *Siege of Rhodes*, and caus'd it to be Acted as a just *Drama*. But as few Men have the happiness to *begin* and *finish* any new Project, so neither did *he* live to make his Design perfect: There wanted the fullness of a *Plot*, and the variety of *Characters* to form it as it ought: And perhaps, says *Dryden*, somewhat might have been added to the beauty of the *Stile*. All which he would have perform'd with more exactness, had he pleas'd to have given us another Work of the same Nature. For my self (says *Dryden*) and others who come after him, we are bound, with all Veneration to his Memory, to acknowledge what advantage we receiv'd from that excellent Ground-Work which *he* laid: And since it is an easie thing to add to what already is invented, we ought all of us, says *Dryden*, without envy to him, or partiality to our selves, to yield him the precedence in it. **Dryd.** Essay of *Heroick Plays*.

*Rimer*, in the Preface to his Translation of *Rapin's* Reflexions, &c. tells us, That *D'avenant's* Wit is well known; and that in the *Preface* to his *Gondibert*, appear some Strokes of an Extraordinary Judgment: That he is for *Unbeaten Tracks*, and *New Ways of Thinking*; but that certainly in his untry'd Seas he is no great Discoverer.

One design of the *Epick Poets* before him, was to adorn their own Country, *there* finding their *Heroes* and patterns of *Vertue*; whose Example (as they thought) would have greatest influence and power over Posterity; but *this Poet*, says *Rimer*, steers a different Course, his *Heroes* are all Forreigners: He cultivates a Country, that is nothing akin to him, 'tis *Lombardy* that reaps the honour of all.

Other Poets chose some *Action* or *Heroe* so illustrious, that the Name of the *Poem* prepar'd the Reader, and made way for its reception: But in *this Poem*, says *Rimer*, none can divine, what *Great Action* he intended to celebrate; nor is the Reader oblig'd to know whether the *Heroe* be *Turk* or *Christian*. Nor do the first Lines give any light or Prospect into his *Design*. Methinks, says *Rimer*, though his Religion could not dispence with an *Invocation*, he needed not have scrupl'd at the *Proposition*: Yet he rather chuses to enter in at the top of an House, because the Mortals of *Mean* and *Satisfied Minds* go in at the Door. And I believe, says *Rimer*, the Reader is not well pleas'd to find his Poem begin with the praises of *Aribert*, when the Title had promis'd a *Gondibert*. But before he falls on any other business, he presents the Reader with a Description of each particular *Heroe*, not trusting their *Actions* to speak for them; as former *Poets* had done. Their practice was fine and artificial, *his* (he tells us) is a *New way*. Many of his *Characters* have but little of the *Heroick* in them; *Dalga* is a Jilt, proper only for *Comedy*; *Birtha* for a *Pastoral*; and *Astragon*, in the manner here describ'd, yields no very great Ornament to an *Heroick Poem*; nor are his *Battles*, less liable to Censure, than those of *Homer*.

He dares not, as other *Heroick Poets*, heighten the Action, by making *Heaven* and *Hell* interest'd, for fear of offending against *Probability*, and yet he tells of

—Threads by patient *Parcæ* slowly spun.

And for being dead, his Phrase is,

“*Heaven call'd him, where peacefully he rules a Star.*”

And the *Emerald* he gives to *Birtha*, has a stronger tang of the Old Woman, and is a greater *improbability*, than all the Enchantments in *Tasso*. A just *Medium* (says *Rimer*) reconciles the farthest Extreams, and one preparation may give credit to the most unlikely Fiction. In *Marino*, *Adonis* is presented with a *Diamond-Ring*, where, indeed, the Stone is much-what of the same Nature; but this Present is made by *Venus*: And from a *Goddeſs* could not be expected a Gift of Ordinary Virtue.

Although a Poet is oblig'd to know all Arts and Sciences, yet he ought discreetly to mannage this Knowledge. He must have Judgment to select what is noble or beautiful, and proper for his occasion. He must by a particular *Chymistry* extract the Essence of Things, without soiling his Wit with the gross and trumpery. But some Poets labour to appear skilful with that wretched affectation, they dote on the very terms and jargon: Exposing themselves rather to be laugh't at by the *Apprentices*, than to be admir'd by *Philosophers*: But whether *D'avenant* be one of *those*, I leave others to examine.

The sort of *Verse* he makes choice of, in his *Gondibert*, might, as *Rimer* supposes, contribute much to the Vitiating of his *Stile*; for thereby he obliges himself to stretch every Period to the end of four Lines: Thus the Sense is broken perpetually with *Parentheses*, the Words jumbld in confusion, and a darkness spread over all; so that the Sense is either not discern'd, or found not sufficient for one just *Verse*, which is sprinkld on the whole *Tetrastick*.

In the *Italian* and *Spanish*, where all the *Rhymes* are *disyllable*, and the percussion stronger, *this* kind of *Verse* may be necessary; and yet to temper that grave March, they repeat the same *Rhyme* over again, and then they close the *Stanza* with a *Couplet*, further to sweeten the Severity. But in *French* and *English*, where we Rhime generally with only one Syllable, the *Stanza* is not allow'd, much less the *alternate Rhyme* in long Verse; for the sound of the Monosyllable Rhyme is either lost e're we come to its Correspondent, or we are in pain by the so long expectation and suspense. This *alternate Rhyme*, and the downright *Morality* throughout whole *Canto's* together, says *Rimer*, shew *D'avenant* better acquainted with the *Quatrains* of *Pybrach*, which he speaks of, than with any true Models of *Epick Poesie*.

After all, says *Rimer*, *D'avenant* is said to have a particular Talent for the *Manners*; his Thoughts are great, and there appears something *roughly Noble* throughout this Fragment; which, had he been pleas'd to finish it, would, doubtless, not have been left so open to the Attack of *Criticks*. *Rimer's Pref.* to his *Translat. of Rapin's Reflex. on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie*.

To

To conclude, as Sir *William D'avenant* was a *Wit* himself, and would often play upon others; so he sometimes had it return'd upon him, as appears by these following Verses of Sir *John Suckling*:

*Will. D'avenant asham'd of a foolish Mischance,  
That he had got lately Travelling into France,  
Modestly hoped the Handsomness of's Muse,  
Might any of Dormity about him excuse.*

And

*Surely the Company would have been content,  
If they could have found any President;  
But in all their Records, either in Verse or Prose,  
There was not one Laureat without a Nose.*

## Sir John Denham.

**H**E was the only Son of Sir *John Denham* of *Little Horsey* in *Essex*, but born at *Dublin* in *Ireland*. His Father being at the time of his Birth a Judge of that Kingdom, and Lord *Chief Baron* of the *Exchequer*. But before the foggy Air of that Climate could influence, or any way vitiate his Mind, he was brought from thence, his Father being preferr'd to be one of the *Barons* of the *Exchequer* in *England*. At Sixteen Years of Age, Anno 1631. he was taken from School, and sent to the University of *Oxford*, where he became a Member of *Trinity Colledge*. In this Society he spent some Years; but afterwards returning to *London*, he

K

follow'd

follow'd the Study of the *Civil Law*. But the Civil War breaking out, he zealously espousing the Interest of the *Royal Party*, was forc'd to go beyond Sea; and at his Majesties departure from *St. Germain's* to *Fersey*, he was pleas'd, without any sollicitation, to confer upon Sir *John*, the Office of *Surveyor General* of all his Majesties *Royal Buildings*; and at his *Coronation* created him *Knight of the Bath*.

He dyed on the Tenth of *March*, 1668. at his House near *White-Hall*, and was buried the 23<sup>d</sup> following at *Westminster*, amongst those famous Poets, *Chaucer*, *Spencer*, and *Cowley*.

*Winstanley*, in the *Lives of the English Poets*, says, That Sir *John Denham* was a Gentleman, who, to his other Honours, had this added, That he was one of the chief of the *Delphick Quire*, and for his Writings worthy to be Crown'd with a Wreath of *Stars*. The Excellency of his Poetry may be seen in his *Coopers Hill*, which (says *Winstanley*) whosoever shall deny, can be accounted no Friends to the *Muses*: His Tragedy of the *Sophy*, is equal to any of the Chiefest Authors, which, with his other Works bound together in one Volume, will make his Name famous to all Posterity.

*Dryden*, in his *Epist. Dedic. to Rival Ladies*, tells us, That Sir *John Denham's Coopers Hill*, is a Poem, which for the Majesty of the Style, is, and ever will be, the exact Standard of good Writing.

*Gerard Langbaine*, in his Account of the *English Dramatick Poets*, calls Sir *John Denham*, a Poet of the First Form, whose Virtue and Memory will ever be as dear to all Lovers of Poetry, as his Person was to Majesty it self; viz. King *Charles* the First and Second.

His



His Verses on Sir Richard Fanshawe's Translation of *Il Pastor Fido*, and his Preface to the *Destruction of Troy*, shew sufficiently his Judgment, and his *Translations* themselves his Genius, for Performances of that Nature: And admitting it true, that few *Versions* deserve Praise; yet, says *Langbaine*, His are to be excepted from the General Rule. His *Elegy* on Mr. Cowley, will make his Name famous to Posterity: And there wants nothing to eternise his Name, but a Pen equal to *his*, (if any such were to be found) to perform the like friendly Office to his *Manes*.

*Antonius à Wood*, in his *Athenæ Oxonienses*, pag. 302. informs us, That in the latter end of the Year 1641. Sir John Denham publish'd the Tragedy call'd the *Sophy*, which took extreamly much, and was admir'd by all Ingenious Men, particularly by *Edm. Waller* of *Beaconsfield*, who then said of the Author, That he broke out like the Irish Rebellion, *Threescore Thousand strong*, when no body was aware, or in the least suspected it.

## John Donne,

WAS born in *London*, in the Year 1573. About the Seventeenth Year of his Age he was admitted into *Lincolne's-Inn*, whither he betook himself from the University of *Oxford*; but instead of poring upon tedious Reports, Judgments, and Statute-Books, he accomplish'd himself with the Politer kind of Learning, moderately enjoy'd the Pleasures of the Town,

and frequented good Company, to which the sharpness of his Wit, and gaiety of Fancy, rendred him not a little grateful; in which state of Life, he compos'd his more brisk and youthful Poems, which are rather commended for the Height of Fancy, and acuteness of Conceit, than for the smoothness of the Verse. At last, by King *James's* Command, or rather earnest perswasion, setting himself to the Study of Divinity, and entering into Holy Orders, he was first made Preacher of *Lincolne's-Inn*, and afterwards advanc'd to be *Dean of Pauls*: And as of an eminent *Poet* he became a much more eminent Preacher, so he rather improv'd than relinquisht his *Poetical* Fancy; only converting it from Humane and Wordly, to Divine and Heavenly Subjects. He died the last of *March*, 1631.

*Jsaac Walton*, in the Life of *John Donne*, pag. 52. says, That the Recreations of his Youth were *Poetry*, in which he was so happy, as if *Nature* and all her Varieties had been made only to exercise his sharp Wit, and high Fancy: And in those Pieces, which were facetiously Compos'd, and carelessly scatter'd (most of them being written before the Twentieth Year of his Age) it may appear by his choice *Metaphors*, that both *Nature* and all the *Arts* joyned to assist him with their utmost Skill.

The *Publisher* of Mr. *Waller's* 2d Part of his *Poems*, in the *Preface*, tells us, That we are beholden to Mr. *Waller* for the *new-turn* of *Verse*, which he brought in, and the improvement he made in our *Numbers*. Before his time, Men Rhym'd indeed, and that was all; as for the harmony of Measure, and that dance of Words, which good Ears are so much pleas'd with, *they* knew nothing of it. *Their Poetry then* was made up almost entirely

entirely of *Monosyllables*; which, when they come together in any Cluster, are certainly the most harsh, untunable Things in the World. If any Man (says my *Author*) doubts of this, let him read ten Lines in *Donne*, and he'll be quickly convinc'd.

*Dryden* remarks, That *Donne* has great Variety, Multiplicity, and Choice of Thoughts; but he affects the *Metaphysicks*, not only in his *Satires*, but in his *Amorous Verses*, where *Nature* only should reign; and perplexes the Minds of the *Fair Sex* with nice Speculations of Philosophy, when he shou'd engage their Hearts, and entertain them with the *Softnesses* of Love. *Dryd.* *Dedic.* before *Juvenal*, pag. 3.

Would not *Donne's Satires*, which abound with so much Wit, appear more Charming, if he had taken care of his *Words*, and of his *Numbers*? But he follow'd *Horace* so very close, that of necessity he must fall with him: And, says *Dryden*, I may safely say it of this present Age, That if we are not so great *Wits* as *Donne*, yet, certainly, we are better *Poets*. *Dryd.* *ibid.* pag. 46.

## Quintus Ennius,

THE Ancientest of the *Latin Poets* that we hear of, except *Livius Andronicus*, and *Cn. Nævius*. He was born at *Rudiae*, a City of *Calabria* in *Spain*, in the Second Year of the 135th *Olympiad*. 237 Years before *Christ*. He was brought to *Rome* first by *Cato Censorius*, for his Learning. He died of the *Gout*, which he got by

by his immoderate drinking of *Wine*, when he was above Seventy Years of Age.

He wrote besides his *Annals* in Verse, *Satyr*s, *Comedies*, and *Tragedies*; of all which we have nothing now remaining, but only some few Fragments.

This *Author* was so entirely belov'd of *Scipio Africanus* (whom he accompanied in the Wars, and Wrote a *Poem* in *Hexameter* Verse, of the Second *Punick* War) that he caused the Image of *Ennius* to be set on his Sepulchre.

*Cicero*, in his *Oration* for *L. Muræna*, cap. xiv. calls *Ennius*, an Ingenious Poet, and a very good Author.

*Horace*, in the First *Epist.* of his Second Book, Verse 50. says, That *Ennius* had both Wisdom and Courage, and that he was a *Second Homer*.

What Opinion *Lucretius* had of *Ennius*, appears in his first Book, verse 117. &c.

*Ennius* ut noster cecinit, qui primus amæno  
Detulit ex *Helicone* perenni fronde Coronam;  
Per gentes *Italas* omnium quæ clara clueret.  
Eth præterea tamen esse *Acherusa* templa  
*Ennius* æternis exponit versibus edens.

As our Fam'd *Ennius* sings, upon whose Brow  
The first and freshest Crowns of Laurel grow,  
That ever Learned Italy could show;  
Tho' he in lasting Numbers doth express  
The Stately *Acherusian* Palaces.

Englished by Tho. Creech.

Notwithstanding it is reported of *Virgil*, that being one day found reading of *Ennius*, and some body asking him

him what he had been doing, his answer was, *Se aurum in Sterquilinio colligere*, That, *He had been gathering Gold out of a Dung-hill*: Yet *Macrobius*, lib. 6. *Saturnal. cap. 1.* assures us, That *Virgil* was so great an admirer of *Ennius*, that he had stole many things out of him; some instances whereof *Macrobius* does there give us.

*Paulus Merula*, in the beginning of his *Comment* upon the *Fragments* of *Ennius's Annals*, says, That *Ennius* was really the *Father* of all that *Elegance*, and *Politeness*, which afterwards appear'd amongst the *Latin Poets*.

*Lilius Gyraldus*, in his Fourth Dialogue *De Poetis Antiquis*, informs us, That *Ennius* had a sharp Wit, and that he was very quick and ready with his Pen; that his Sentences were smart, tho' his Words and Phrase were plain and without Art, forasmuch as he would always keep to the common Dialect.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in *Scaligerana* 1. pag. 78. tells us, That *Ennius* the Ancient Poet, was one of a High and Lofty Genius; and that he had so great a value for him, that for his part he could be contented with the loss of *Lucan*, *Statius*, *Silius Italicus*, and the rest of those Sparks, provided we could have *Ennius* Entire and Compleat.

*Adrianus Turnebus*, in the Thirteenth Book of his *Adversaria*, cap. 6. says, That *Ennius's* Verses have somewhat in them of the same Nature with *Wine*, which we generally count the better, and the pleasanter, for being Old.

And in another Place in his *Adversaria*, he tells us, That the Verses of *Ennius* contain both Profit and Pleasure; and that his Style (tho' one would not think it) is Polite.

*Rapin* remarks, That *Ennius* had not in his days discover'd the *Grace* and *Harmony*, which is in the *Numbers*, whereof appears no footstep in his Verse. *Rap. Reflex.* on *Arist. Treatise of Poesie, part 1. sect. 37.*

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## *Euripides,*

A Learned *Tragical Poet*, born at *Salamis*, the very day that *Xerxes's* great Army was Routed by the *Athenians*, in the first Year of the 75th Olympiad, about 480 Years before *Christ*. He was in great favour with *Archelaus* King of *Macedon*. He Wrote in all 75 Plays. For his great Chastity, and avoiding the Company of *Women*, he was call'd *Μισογυνος*, *Woman-bater*; altho' he was Twice Married: Concerning his death there are divers Relations; some think he was worried by *Archelaus's* Dogs; that were set upon him by the malice of the Poet *Aridæus*, that envi'd him and *Cratena*; Others, that he was pulled in Pieces by *Women*. He died in the 75th Year of his Age, and was buried at *Pella*.

Of his 75 Plays, there are now remaining but 19.

*Cicero*, in a Letter to *Tyro*, lib. 16. *Familiar. Epist.* tells him, That he had a very great value for *Euripides*, and that every Verse of this Author bore a mighty Credit with him.

*Rimer*, in his *Short View of Tragedy*, pag. 158. says, That at *Athens* (they tell us) the *Tragedies* of *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*, were enroll'd with their *Laws*, and made part of their *Statute-Book*.

*Dryden,*

*Dryden*, in his *Essay of Dramatick Poesie*, pag. 10. tells us, That while the *Tragedies* of *Euripides*, *Sophocles*, and *Seneca* are in our hands, he can never see one of those *Plays* which are now Written, but it increases his Admiration of the *Ancients*; and yet he must acknowledge further, that to admire them as we ought, we should understand them beeter than we do. Doubtless many things appear flat to us, the Wit of which depended on some *Custom* or *Story*, which never came to our Knowledge, or perhaps on some *Criticisme* in their Language, which (says *Dryden*) being so long dead, and only remaining in their Books, 'tis not possible they should make us understand perfectly.

*Borrichius*, in his *Dissertat. Acad. de Poetis*, pag. 30. observes to us, That *Euripides* for Eloquence, and Prudence, was equal to, if not beyond *Sophocles*. *Euripides* took more care in the placing of his Words, and ordering of his Sentences, than ever *Sophocles* did; and yet *Aristotle* thought him not exact enough in the contrivance of his *Fables*. *Sophocles*, by his Stile, seems to be rather a Man for *Business*, than for *Words*; whereas the Stile of *Euripides* favours more of the *Scholar* and the *Orator*: And therefore if we are for the lofty, and sublime Tragedy, *Sophocles* carries it; but if for fine Language, then *Euripides* has it.

*Borrichius* also informs us, That *Euripides* is often blam'd by the Learned, for his not observing *Poetical Probability*, which is a thing that *Aristotle* recommends so highly to all *Poets*; which (indeed) is most agreeable to that prudent advice of *Horace* in his *De Arte Poeticâ*:

*Aut Famam sequere, aut sibi convenientia fingere.*

*Rapin* remarks, That the *Tragedies* of *Euripides* have more of *Action*, of *Morality*, and of wonderful *Incidents*, than those of *Sophocles*.

He also observes, That *Euripides* is not exact in the Contrivance of his *Fables*; his *Characters* want variety, he falls often into the same *Thoughts*, on the same adventures; that he does not Religiously enough observe *Decencies*; and by a too great affectation to be *Moral* and *Sententious*, he is not so ardent and passionate as he ought to be; for this reason (says *Rapin*) he goes not to the Heart, so much as *Sophocles*; there are *precipitations* in the preparation of his *Incidents*, as in the *Suppliants*, where *Theseus* Levies an Army, *Marches* from *Athens* to *Thebes*, and returns on the same day. The *Discoveries* of his Plots are not at all Natural, these are perpetual *Machins*; *Diana* makes the discovery in the Tragedy of *Hippolitus*; *Minerva* that of the *Iphigenia* in *Taurica*; *Tetis* that of *Andromache*; *Castor* and *Pollux*, that of *Helena*, and that of *Electra*; and so of others. **Rap.** Reflex. on *Aristotle's* Treatise of *Poesie*, part 2. sect. xxi, and xxii.

*Rimer* tells us, That *Euripides* has been blam'd for making his *Characters* more wicked than they ought to be in *Tragedy*: That he was not taxed by *Aristophanes* and *Aristotle* only, but by *Sophocles*, and the general Sense of *Athens* was against him. They said, in those days, that *Comedy* (whose Province was Humour and ridiculous matter only) was to represent Things worse than the truth: *History* to describe the truth, but *Tragedy* was to invent Things better than the truth. Like good *Painters* they must design their Images like the Life; but yet better and more beautiful than the Life. The *Malefactor* of *Tragedy*, says *Rimer*, must be a better sort of *Malefactor* than those that live in the present



present Age. For an obdurate, impudent, and impenitent *Malefactor* can neither move *Compassion* nor *Terrour*; nor be of any imaginable use in *Tragedy*. *Ritmer's Tragedies of the last Age consider'd*, &c. pag. 36.

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## *Caius Valerius Flaccus,*

**B**Orn at *Setia*, now call'd *Sezze*, a City in *Campania di Roma*, in *Italy*, but liv'd most part of his time at *Padua*. He writ eight Books of *Argonauticks*, being a Poem of the Expedition of *Jason*, for the *Golden-Fleece*, which he dedicated to the Emperour *Domitian*; which Poem being extant, he is said to have written in imitation of *Appollonius Rhodius*.

*Quintilian* was very much concern'd, that *Valerius Flaccus* being snatch'd away by an untimely death, could not finish his *Argonauticks*; which, as he complains, was a great loss to the Learned:

*Julius Scaliger*, in his Sixth Book *De Poeticâ*, cap. 6. pag. 639. uses the very same Argument to excuse the harsh Style of *this Author*, viz. because he died before he had time to review his *Argonauticks*; but withal he tells us, That he was a Man of Wit, of a happy Fancy, of a solid Judgment, and of extraordinary diligence and application; and that his *Verses* have a pleasant and harmonious sound: Though at the same time he owns, that this *Poem*, has none of those other *Graces* and *Beauties* requisite to *Poetry*. But in conclusion, he says, That *Flaccus* was above the pitch of an ordinary Poet.

*Caspar Barthius*, in the first Book, and seventeenth Chapt. of his *Adversaria*, tells us, That *Valerius Flaccus* is really a more considerable Poet, than generally he is allow'd to be; and that they are either *Pedants* or your *half-learned Men*, who neglect to read him, through an Opinion, that his *Stile* is harsh and disagreeable; whereas, says *Barthius*, I take him to be a Poet of a Noble, and an elevated Air.

He further observes, in the Twenty Sixth Book, Chap. 3. how very unjust even some of the Learned are to *Valerius Flaccus*, in the not owning his *Poetical Genius*, his Learning, his Gravity, and his Judgment. And he also makes this further *Remarque*, that *Valerius Flaccus* appears more considerable when he Marches alone, and without a guide, than when he treads in the footsteps of *Appollonius Rhodius*.

*Borrichius*, in his *Dissert. Acad. de Poetis*, pag. 61. says There must be acknowledg'd in *Valerius Flaccus*, although he was not come to his Perfection, a true *Poetical Genius*; that he had very often high, and Noble Flights, that his Judgment was Solid, and his Style florid enough, though sometimes it had unevennesses, and seem'd a little rugged, which undoubtedly he would have soften'd, and mended, had he liv'd some time longer.

*Rapin* observes to us, That *Valerius Flaccus* in his *Argonauticks* was both cold and flat, through his affecting a loftiness of Expression, and not having a *Genius* for it. **Rap.** *Reflex.* on *Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie*, part 1. sect. xxx.

He also tells us, That the Poem of *Valerius Flaccus*, on the *Argonauts*, is extremely mean; the *Fable*, the *Contrivance*, the *Conduct*, all there are of a very low Character. **Rap.** *ibid.* part 2. sect. xv.

*Joannes.*

*Joannes Ludovicus Vives*, in his third Book *De Tradendis Disciplinis*, pag. 541. says, He does not see to what purpose one should read either *Valerius Flaccus*, or *Appollonius Rhodius*, as if a Man could not spend his time better; and yet he says, he does not so much dislike either their *Verse* or their *Stile*, as the meanness of the Subject.

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## *Hieronymus Fracastorius,*

**W**AS born at *Verona*, but dyed at *Padua* of an Apoplexy, on the Sixth day of *August*, 1553. being above Seventy Years of Age.

*Boissardus*, in his *Icones Virorum Illustrum*, styles *Fracastorius* a Person of the greatest Learning; as being a Physician, a Poet, an Astronomer, and the most Learned Philosopher of that Age: In which several Sciences, according to *Boissardus*, he got so great a Reputation, that he very well deserv'd to be counted equal to any of the *Ancients*.

He further saith, That *Fracastorius's* Poems, are so much esteem'd of among all the Men of Learning, that they are compar'd even with *Virgil's*; and that in respect of their Elegance, smartneis of Expression, and purity of Style, they are so highly extoll'd, that by many *Fracastorius* is call'd, *The Divine Poet*.

*Thuanus*, in his History of the Year, 1553. says, That *Fracastorius* had (besides his exact Knowledge of Philosophy, and the *Mathematicks*, and especially *Astronomy*, which he had most Learnedly illustrated,) an exquisite

quisite Judgment, and an admirable Wit: By which means he had both found out, and explain'd many things either altogether unknown to, or else not well understood by the *Ancients*; That he never made any other gain by his Practice of Physick, than his own Glory and Reputation; and that he had so much improv'd the Art of *Poetry*, that even by the Confession of his *Rivals* he was little inferiour to *Virgil* himself: And this made *Jacobus Sannazarius* (who was not overapt to commend other Mens Learning,) upon the sight of *Fracaſtorius's* Poem of *Syphilis*, to cry out, That not only *Joannes Jovianus Pontanus*, but that *He himself* was overcome in his Poem, which was so accurate, that, as *Thuanus* tells us, it had cost him no less than twenty Years Study and Labour.

*Julius Scaliger*, in his Sixth Book *De Poetica*, pag. 817. speaking of *Fracaſtorius's* Poems, says, They are so perfect, that they rather deserve his *Admiration*, than his *Censure*. He also styles *Fracaſtorius*, the very best Poet next *Virgil*; adding at the same time, that the *Syphilis* was a Divine Poem.

To conclude, for a Testimony of the great esteem *Julius Scaliger* had of this Extraordinary Person, he Wrote a Poem in his Praise, Entituled *Aræ Fracaſtorææ*.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in *Scaligerana* 1. observes, That *Fracaſtorius* shew'd himself an Excellent Poet in his *Syphilis*.

*Gerardus Johannes Vossius*, in his *de Mathematicis*, pag. 375. reckons *Fracaſtorius* among the chief Ornaments of that Age: He also tells us, that his Fellow Citizens, after his Death, erected his Statue at *Verona* in Marble, as they had formerly done to *Catullus* and *Pliny*.

Mr. Tate in the Life of *Fracaſtorius*, before his Tranſlation of *Syphilis*, ſays, That *Fracaſtorius* was deſcended from the *Fracaſtorian* Family of great Antiquity in *Verona*; and that he ſeem'd not only to Rival the Fame of *Catullus* and *Pliny*, who had long before made that City Renown'd, but to have very far exceeded all his Contemporaries, for Learning and Poetry.

He further obſerves, That *Fracaſtorius* was never Cenſorious of other Mens performances, but always glad of an occaſion to commend; for which he was deſervedly celebrated by *Johannes Baptiſta* in a Noble *Epigram*. In his leiſure, ſays Tate, he diverted himſelf with Reading *Hiſtory*, at which time *Polybius*, or *Plutarch*, were never out of his hands. To conclude, the Age in which he liv'd (ſays Tate) ſaw nothing equal to his Learning, but his Honesty.

*Borrichius*, in his *Differt. Acad. De Poetis*, pag. 98. highly commends thoſe two Poems of *Fracaſtorius*, his *Syphilis*, and his *Alcon*; He ſays, they ſhew him to be both a man of Learning, and of Prudence; but at the ſame time he obſerves, this Poet was not always exact in Numbers, and Cadence, and that he rather choſe to Inſtruct, than to delight the Reader.

*Rapin* obſerves to us, That *Fracaſtorius*, who with ſo good Succeſs Writ his *Syphilis*, the moſt excellent Poem in *Latin Verſe* that theſe latter Ages have produced in *Italy*, and which is Writ in imitation of *Virgil's Georgicks*, was not ſo happy in his *Epick* Poem of *Joſeph*, Viceroy of *Egypt*, a Fragment whereof is Extant; for this Poem, ſays *Rapin*, is of a poor Genius, and a low Character. Rap. Reflex. on *Ariſt. Treatiſe of Poefie*, part I. ſect. xiv.

The ſame Author does alſo remark, That *Fracaſtorius* has only Copied *Virgil's Phraſes*, without expreſſing his Spirit;

*Spirit*; that he has (indeed) some touches of that noble *Air*, but not many; that whenever he strains to come up to *Virgil*, he presently *falls* and returns again to his own *Genius*; and that amidst the vain *Efforts* of a *Servile* Imitation, there continually escapes from him some *Strokes* of his own natural *Spirit*. *Rap, ibid. sect. xxxii.*

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## *Hugo Grotius,*

**W**AS born at *Delph* in *Holland*, the Tenth day of *April*, 1583. He dyed at *Rostock*, a City of the *Lower-Saxony*, the Eighteenth day of *August*, Old Stile, 1645.

*Edward Phillips*, in his *Theatrum Poetarum*, says, That *Grotius's* Equal in Fame for Wit and Learning, *Christendom* of late Ages hath rarely produc'd; that he was particularly of so happy a *Genius* in *Poetry*, that had his *Annals*, his Book *De Veritate Christianæ Religionis*, his *De Satisfactione Christi*, and other his extolled Works in *Prose*, never come to Light, his Extant and Universally approv'd *Latin Poems*, had been sufficient to gain him an everlasting Name.

*Hofman*, in his *Lexicon*, calls *Grotius*, The *Phœnix* of the Age.

*Salmasius*, in his *Exercitationes upon Solinus*, styles him, One that was exquisitely Learned in all sorts of Learning.

*Selden*, in the first Book, chap. 26. of his *Mare Clausum*, says, That *Hugo Grotius*, was a Man of great Learning,

ing, and extraordinary Knowledge in things both *Divine*. and *Humane*.

*Gerardus Johannes Vossius*, in his *De Poetis Latinis*, pag. 82. calls *Grotius*, the great Ornament, or rather the Miracle of the Age. Than *whom*, as he tells us, in his *De Historicis Latinis*, pag. 713. the Sun does not shine upon, nor is there living upon the Face of the Earth, any Creature of greater Learning.

*Isaac Casaubon*, in his *Epist.* 738. to *Daniel Heinsius*, Dated in *April* 1613. tells him, he could not sufficiently proclaim his own happiness, in the enjoying sometimes the Company of that great Man, *Hugo Grotius*. A Person highly to be admir'd! The excellency of whose Divine Wit, no man could be able throughly to comprehend, unless he observes both his Countenance, and his way of speaking. *He says*, There was Honesty in his very Looks; and his Discourse did sufficiently shew his Exquisite Learning, and his great Sincerity. And that you may not (*says Casaubon*) think that I am the only one who Admires him; all Men of either Learning or Piety, who are acquainted with him, have also the very same Opinion of him.

*David Blondel*, in his Second Book, chap. 3. of the *Sybils*, having occasion to mention *Grotius*, he there gives him this Character, that he was a Man of extraordinary Endowments, whether we consider the Transcendency of his Wit, the Universality of his Knowledge, which cannot be too highly esteem'd, and the Diversity of his Writings.

*Monsieur de Balzac*, in his Fifth Book, Letter the 25. to *Chappelain*, thus remarks of *Grotius*, That besides his solid Learning, his forcible way of Reasoning, and his florid Style, there is observable a certain Air of Honesty in all the Works of this Great Man; and that *this* is

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more,

more, than any one dare say either of *Scaliger* or *Salmafus*.

*Claudius Sarravius*, in his *Preface* to *Grotius's Epistles*, makes this Observation, That though *Grotius* in all his other Works, appear'd to be a great Man; yet in his *Epistles* and *Poems*, he was Incomparable and Divine.

*Borrichius*, in his *Dissertat. Acad. de Poetis*, pag. 142. says, That never any thing was more Learned, than the Works of *Hugo Grotius* in Divine Matters. What (says he) can be finer, or more Masculine than his *Epick Poem* concerning the History of *Jonas*? Or was there ever any thing Writ in a more Chast and Purer Style, than the *Elegies* he Compos'd upon the Subject of *Susanna*? And he further tells us, That nothing can be Graver, or more Majestick than his Two *Tragedies*, *Christus Patiens*, and his *Sophompaneas*, although they have fallen under the *Censure* of some *Criticks*: And that as for his *Epigrams*, and his *Sylvæ*, they likewise deserve their Commendation, and Praise; though it must be allow'd, there is not the same *Wit* and *Smartness* in all of them; but that some are much better than others.

*Rapin* tells us, That *Grotius* has Writ nobly enough in *Latin Verse*; but that the great Learning wherewith he was fraught, hinder'd him from thinking things in that *Delicate* manner, which makes the *Beauty Rap. Reflex. on Arist. Treatise of Poetic, part 2. sect. xvi.*

He also remarks, That *Grotius* in his *Tragedy* of *Joseph*, has a *Contrivance* too simple, the *Incidents* are cold, the *Narrations* tedious, the *Passions* forc'd, and the *Style* constrain'd. *Rap. ibid. sect. 23.*

*Grotius's*



*Grotius's Poems, Collected, and Publish'd by his Brother William Grotius, are Prohibited by the Church of Rome.*

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*Lilius Gregorius Gyraldus,*

**A**N *Italian*, born in *Ferrara*, the 14th. of *June*, in the Year 1478. He Dyed of the Gout, in the Month of *February*, in the Year 1552.

He was Author of several *Poems*; besides what he Wrote in *Prose*, as his History of the Heathen Gods, and his Large Volume concerning both the *Ancient Greek* and *Latin Poets*, as also of the *Poets* who liv'd in his time, and many other things, which have given him an Honourable Memory.

*Hofman*, in his *Lexicon*, says, That *Gyraldus* did very well deserve to be call'd the *Parro* of that Age, inasmuch as he was one of an Invincible Memory, an excellent Wit, and very famous for all sorts of Learning.

*Isaac Casaubon*, in his Notes upon the Eighth Book of *Diogenes Laertius*, styles *Gyraldus*, a Man of Solid Learning, and one who Wrote with great accuracy.

*Thuanus*, in his History of the Year 1552. affirms, That *Gyraldus* was very well skill'd both in the *Greek* and *Latin*, as also in the Politer sort of Learning, and particularly in Antiquity, which he had Illustrated by several of his *Pieces*. But in conclusion he says, That though *Gyraldus* deserv'd a better Fate, yet all his Life time he struggl'd with sickness and Misfortunes.

*Leander Albertus*, in his Description of *Italy*, says, That *Gyraldus* had so happy a Memory, that whatever he once read, he never forgot.

*Moreri*, in his *Grand Dictionnaire*, assures us, That in the Opinion of all Men, *Gyraldus* was accounted one of the greatest Wits, that *Italy* had produc'd in these latter Ages; and that he had made so wonderful a Progress in all the *Sciences*, that there was not any of them, but he was Master of.

*Gerardus Johannes Vossius*, lib. 1. *Idololatr. cap. 29.* observes to us, That *Gyraldus* had a Judgment equal to his Learning. And in his *De Histor. Latin. pag. 736.* he tells us, That *Gyraldus* was Man of much greater Learning, and Diligence, than ever *Petrus Crinitus* was.

The same Author, in his *De Poetis Latinis, pag. 82.* speaking of *Gyraldus's* History concerning the *Poets*, calls it a Work not only of great Wit and Judgment, but also of vast Learning and Industry: He says, There is indeed here and there a *Poet*, whose History might have been more accurately Written; but take it throughout, it is a Work of so much Perfection, that even the most Learned may well be discourag'd, from ever hoping for better success in so vast an Undertaking.

*Borrichius*, in his *De Poetis, pag. 99.* says, That as *Gyraldus* hath shew'd a great deal of Learning and Judgment in his History concerning the *Ancient Greek and Latin Poets*, so has he writ of the *Poets of his Time*, with all the Truth and Freedom imaginable.

But *Joseph Scaliger*, in his *Confut. Fab. Bourdon. &c.* is of another Opinion, for he there tells us, That nothing in Nature is so silly and ridiculous, as *Gyraldus's* Censure on the *Poets*; tho' at the same time he is pleas'd

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to say, That he was a Man of much Reading, and great Knowledge.

The Works of *this Author* are inserted in the *Index Expurgatorius*, Printed at *Madrid*, Anno 1667.

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## *Daniel Heinsius,*

**W**AS born at *Gaunt* in *Flanders*, in the Month of *May*, 1580. He was History Professor, and Library-Keeper at the University of *Leyden*. He died the 25th of *February*, 1655.

He was no less eminent for his Excellent Style in *Greek* and *Latin* Verse, of which sufficient Testimonies are extant, than for his several Learned Works which he wrote in *Prose*.

*Gabriel Naudæus*, in his 59th *Epist.* to *Joannes Beverovicus*, dated the third *Kal.* of *Sept.* 1657. says, That he had so great a Veneration for *Dan. Heinsius*, that he thought his very Name to be almost *Divine*.

*Jacobus Crucius*, in an *Epist.* to *Dan. Colonius*, dated the xxth of *Febr.* 1621. gives this Character of *Dan. Heinsius*, That Nature had taken as much Care in the adorning and beautifying this Excellent Person, as ever *Zeuxis* had done, to set forth his *Venus*; or *Phydias* did, to adorn the Statue of *Minerva*.

*Johannes Polyander*, Rector of the University of *Leyden*, in a Letter to *Joann. Beverovicus*, dated at *Leyden*, July the 24th, 1635. calls *Dan. Heinsius*, the great Ornament of his Age, a Person of admirable Eloquence, of the deepest Learning, and one whom God  
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had adorn'd with great skill in the *Eastern* and *Western* Languages.

*Caspar Barthius*, in the 59th Book of his *Adversaria*, chap. 13. says, That *Dan. Heinsius* had not his Fellow for Wit, Learning, and Eloquence; that he was the chief Writer of the Age; in many things *Superiour* to most of the *Ancients*, but in few was he their *Inferior*; that his *Greek* and *Latin Poems*, as also his great Learning and Eloquence, the Ages to come would both love and reverence; that the *Graces* and *Beauties* of his *Style* deserv'd the highest *Encomiums*, and could not be enough extoll'd; and to conclude, that since the Creation, there had scarce appear'd any thing that was to be compar'd to him.

*Isaac Casaubon*, in his *Epist.* 318. dated from *Paris*; Jan. 1604, tells *Dan. Heinsius*, that he was a meer *Asteropæus*, a true *Ambodexter*, one who was equally skillful in *Prose* and in *Verse*. He says, when he reads his *Greek Verses*, he fancies himself to be reading *Homer*, not *Heinsius*; and when he reads his *Latin Verses*, then he can't but think he is reading either *Ovid* or *Propertius*.

*Antonius Thysius*, in the Funeral Oration of *Daniel Heinsius*, says, That no One in that Age was more considerable for *Latin Verse*, and that he had not his Match for *Greek Verse*, unless it were *Joseph Scaliger*.

He further tells us, That nothing ever was more *Divine*, than his *Greek Epigrams*, wherein he describ'd the Actions, Sentiments, and Opinions of the Ancient Philosophers; that his *Pandora* was a most Elegant Piece; and, in a word, that never since the *Ancient Greek Poets*, there has been any thing of greater Perfection, nor nearer approaching their Character, than what *Heinsius* has done in their Language. And as for his *Elegies*,

gies, he says, They are to the highest degree full of *Passion* and *Harmony*, and that he has represented in them, all the Wit and Beauty of *Ovid*. See *Denning Witten*. Tom. 2. *De Philosophis*, pag. 180, 181.

*Daniel Georgius Morhofius*, in his *Polyhistor*, pag. 62. tells us, That he was wont often to read, with a great deal of Pleasure, the Verses writ by those two Great Men, *Hugo Grotius*, and *Dan. Heinsius*, in their younger Years; which though (says he) were very short of what they afterwards perform'd; yet it was very pretty to observe that curious *Blossom*, which not long after produc'd such Excellent *Fruit*.

*Borrichius*, in his *De Poetis*, pag. 143. says, That *Daniel Heinsius* did very well deserve to be reckon'd among the most considerable *Poets*, he having oblig'd the Learned with several of his *Poems*, of various Kinds; wherein was to be found nothing either mean, dry, or barren; but every thing pure, solid, and exact.

He likewise tells us, that at the same time *Heinsius* gave so high a Character of *Thuanus* and *Scaliger* in *Epick Verse*, he himself deserv'd no less; and that he who has wrote with so much Life and Courage concerning the *Contempt* of *Death*, must himself needs be immortal. How choice (says he) is the *Stile* in his *Hipponacte*? and yet how sharp is it every where? What happy bold strokes are there in his *Herodes Infanticida*? And was there ever greater Elegancy than in his *Elegies*?

*Rapin* remarks, That *Dan. Heinsius* has writ nobly enough in *Latin Verse*; but that the great Learning wherewith he (as well as *Grotius*) was fraught, hinder'd him from thinking Things in that delicate manner, which makes the *Beauty* of *Verses*. *Rap. Reflex. on Aristot. &c.* part 2. sect. xvi.

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He further observes, That *Heinsius* in his Tragedy of *Herod*, is tedious in his Narrations, that his Passions are forc'd, and the *Stile* constrain'd. *Rap. ibid. sect. xxiii.*

*Paulus Colomesius*, in his *Opuscula*, pag. 128. says, That *Vossius* told him, That one might easily know the *Stile* of *Daniel Heinsius*, by his so often using the Pronoun, *Qui, Quæ, Quod*. Which (*says Colomesius*) with a great deal of Pleasure I have observ'd to be very true.

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## *Hesiod.*

**A**N Ancient Greek Poet, surnamed *Ascræus*, from *Ascra*, a Town in *Bœotia*, the place not of his Birth, (as hath been generally suppos'd,) but of his Education, according to *Herodotus*, *Strabo*, *Stephanus* and *Valerius Probus*; for he was born at *Cuma* in *Aeolia*; the Son of *Dius* and *Pycimede*; He is affirmed by *Philostratus*, *Velleius Paterculus*, and *M. Varro* (contrary to the Opinion of *Porphyrus* and *Solinus*; the First of whom sets him 100. the other 130. years after) to be Contemporary with *Homer*: which Opinion is confirm'd by an *Epigram* of *Dion*, and the Discourse in the Fifth Book of *Plutarch's Symposiaca*, which makes out that *Homer* and *Hesiod* contended at the Exequies of *Oelycus* the *Thessalian*, and *Amphidamas* of *Chalcis*.

His several Works are reckon'd up in all Fourteen, as well Extant as not Extant, in a Catalogue, which is inserted in *Daniel Heinsius's* Edition of this Poet.

*Velleius*

*Velleius Paterculus*, lib. 1. styles *Hesiod*, a Person of a most curious Fancy, one that was famous and remarkable for the sweetness of his Verse; and who coveted nothing so much, as his own Ease and Quiet.

*Daniel Heinsius*, in the Preface to his Edition of this Poet, Anno 1603. remarks, That among all the Poets, he scarce knew any, but *Homer* and *Hesiod*, who understood how to represent *Nature* in her true *Native dress*; which (*says he*) is infinitely to be preferr'd before all those *Artful* ways that were us'd in After-Times. He further proceeds to tell us, That which to him seem'd the most wonderful, was, that *Nature* had both begun and perfected at the same time her Work in these two Persons, whom for that very reason he makes no scruple to call *Divine*; adding, that *Nature* had, in both these Authors, exhibited to us, a full and perfect *Idea* of all *Human Vertue*.

*Borrichius*, in his *De Poetis*, pag. 10. tells us, That *Hesiod's* Poem, call'd *Ἔργα ἡ Ἡμέρα*, was writ with so much Prudence, and Learning, that, even at this day, the reading it may be of great use to all such as apply themselves to *Moral Philosophy*, to *Policy*, to *Oeconomy*, to *Marine Affairs*, and to *Husbandry*. And as for his *Θεογονία*, or the *Generation of the Gods*, *Borrichius* observes, that we may learn much more by that Piece, than the *Title* seems to import; since such as are curious in finding out the Nature of Things, discover under the Covert of these Fables, Natural Truths and wholesome Maxims, drawn from the deepest Philosophy: which very Observation was formerly made, even by *Plutarch*, in his Treatise *De Legendis Poetis*.

*Tannequy le Fevre*, in his *Abridgment* of the *Lives of the Greek Poets*, says, That *Hesiod* in his Poem, Entituled, *Ἔργα ἡ Ἡμέρα*, did much after the manner of

our *Almanack-Writers*, who do sometimes set down the *Fortunate*, and the *Unfortunate Days*; and that this Work, in the main, is not much to be valued.

*Ludovicus Vives*, in his third Book *De Tradendis Disciplinis*, speaking of *Hesiod's* Θεογονία, says, It is of great use for understanding of the *Poets*, but in other respects, it is e'en good for nothing.

*Dionysius Halicarnassæus*, in his *De linguæ Græcæ Auctoribus*, observes, That *Hesiod's* Stile is both sweet and uniform; and that he chiefly affected the *Middle Stile*, which is neither too mean, nor too lofty.

And *Quintilian*, lib. 10. cap. 1. tells us, That never any Man excell'd *Hesiod* in that sort of Stile.

The *Anonymous German Author*, in his *Bibliographia Curiosa*, remarks, That *Hesiod* is seldom relish'd but by Men of Learning; and that young People especially take no pleasure in reading him, because the Subject he treats of, is in no wise agreeable to 'em.

*Claudius Verderius*, in his *Censio Auctorum*, seems to give another Reason of this Disgust, which is, his too frequent repetition of the same *Epithets*, which (as he observes) is very tedious, and unpleasant to the Reader.

*Clemens Alexandrinus*, lib. vi. *Stromatum*, takes notice of several Verses, stolen *Verbatim* by *Hesiod* out of *Musæus* the Poet.

*Theophilus Gale*, in his third Book, chap. 1. sect. vii. of his *Court of the Gentiles*, assures us, That *Hesiod* receiv'd some of his *Choicest Traditions* from the *Sacred Oracles*, if not immediately, yet Originally, as will appear probable to any that shall take the pains to draw up the *Parallel*.

*Homer,*



## Homer,

THE most Renowned of the *Greek Heroick Poets*; his true Name was *Melesigenes*, from the River *Meles*, near to which he was born; but he was afterwards call'd *Homerus*, from his *Blindness*; not that he was born blind, but fell blind by an Accident, while he resided at *Smyrna*, in the Dialect of which Country, at that time, blind People were stiled *Ὀμηροί*. He flourish'd under *Diognetus*, King of the *Athenians*, 302 Years after the Destruction of *Troy*, and 23 Years before *Iphitus* and *Lycurgus* instituted the *Olympian Games*.

He wrote sundry *Poems*, scatter'd here and there in the Countries where he travell'd; which may be a reason not improbable, why so many Countries should challenge him to be theirs, they having the first *Copies* of his Works, which in succeeding times were gather'd together to make up compleat *Poems*, and were call'd from thence *Rhapsodiæ*, *Ῥαψωδίαί*: Two of these Poems are observ'd to comprehend the two Parts of *Man*: The *Iliads*, describing the Strength and Vigour of the *Body*; and the *Odysses*, the Subtlety and Policy of the *Mind*.

There were no less than *Seven Cities* that contended about *Homer's Birth*, according to that *Distich* of *Sanazarus*:

*Smyrna, Rhodus, Colophon, Salamin, Chius, Argos, Athenæ*  
*Cedite jam; Cælum patria Mæonidæ est.*

*Alexander the Great* had so high a value for *Homer's Iliads*, that (as *Plutarch* tells us) he laid it every night under his Beds head, calling it, *The Institution of Marshal Discipline*.

*Alcibiades*, the *Athenian*, coming into a School, commanded them to bring him *Homer's Book*; when they answer'd they had him not, he struck the Master, and went away, counting it an unworthy thing for a School-Master to be without *Homer*.

*Ælian*, in the Second Book of his *Various History*, chap. 30. says, That *Plato* was at first very much addicted to *Poetry*, and had wrote *Heroick Verses*; which afterwards he burnt, perceiving them to be far inferior to *Homer's*.

In the Twelfth Book, chap. 48. He tells us, That the *Indians* were wont to sing the Verses of *Homer* Translated into their own Language; and not only *they*, but the *Persian Kings* also, if (says *Ælian*) we may believe those who relate it.

And in his Thirteenth Book, chap. 22. he relates, That *Ptolemæus Philopator* having built a Temple to *Homer*, erected a fair Image of him, and placed about the Image those *Cities* which contended for *Homer*. And He further informs us, That *Galaton* the Painter had drawn *Homer Vomiting*, and the rest of the Poets gathering it up; signifying, That what *They* had, was all deriv'd from *Him*.

*Plutarch* in his Discourse of *Garrulity*, or *Talkativeness*, says, That of all the Commendations that were ever given to a Poet, this is the truest, That only *Homer* avoided being irksome to his Readers, as one that was always new, and still flourishing, as it were in the *Prime of Poetick Beauty*.

*Macrobius,*

*Macrobius*, in the Fifth Book of his *Saturnalia*, cap. 3. tells us, There are Three things equally impossible; to take either from *Jupiter*, his *Thunderbolt*; or from *Hercules*, his *Club*; or from *Homer*, the Honour that's due to every Individual Verse of *His*.

*Tannequy le Fevre*, in his *Abridgement* of the Lives of the *Greek Poets*, remarks, That *Homer* had so great a Vogue among the *Ancients*, that they thought they had at any time a sufficient Proof of a thing, if they could but produce the least passage out of *Homer*, for confirming an Opinion, or resolving any Doubts.

*Dionysius Lambinus*, in his Notes upon *Horace de Arte Poetica*, says, That herein *Homer* is chiefly to be admir'd, that among all the several Occurrences of *Human Life*, there is not one, but what he hath most aptly and properly, nay he had almost said *Divinely* expressed.

*Velleius Paterculus*, lib. 1. cap. 5. describes *Homer* to be the greatest Wit that ever was, beyond all Compare; and who, in respect of the Nobleness of his Works, and the Lustre of his Verse, was the only one who deserv'd the Name of a *Poet*.

He likewise *Observes*, That as there had been none before him that he could Imitate, so there was never any, since his time, who was able to imitate him; and that (except *Homer* and *Archilochus*) there cannot be an Instance given of any one Person, who both begun and perfected the same Thing.

*Dionysius Halicarnassæus* Commends *Homer* chiefly for the Contrivance of his Design, the greatness and Majesty of his Expression, and the sweet and passionate motions of his Sentiments.

*Quintilian*, lib. x. cap. 1. was of the Opinion, That in great Matters never any one us'd a more lofty, and Majestick Style, nor in little things express'd himself  
more

more properly, than *Homer*; that his Style was easie, and yet concise; that at the same time he was both grave, and agreeable; that he was as much to be admir'd for his *Copiousness*, as his *Brevity*; and, to conclude, that he was as excellent an *Orator*, as he was a *Poet*.

*Rapin* tells us, That *Homer*, who had a *Genius* accomplish'd for *Poetry*, had the Vastest, Sublimest, Profoundest, and most Universal *Wit* that ever was; 'twas by his *Poems* that all the Worthies of *Antiquity* were form'd: from hence the Lawmakers took the First Plat-form of the Laws they gave to Mankind; The Founders of *Monarchies* and *Commonwealths* from hence took the Model of their *Polities*. Hence the Philosophers found the first Principles of *Morality* which they have taught the People. Hence Physicians have Studied Diseases, and their Cures: Astronomers have Learn'd the Knowledge of Heaven, and Geometricians of the Earth. Hence Kings and Princes have Learn'd the Art to Govern, and Captains to Form a Battel, to Encamp an Army, to Besiege Towns, to Fight and to gain Victories. From this great Original, *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Aristotle*, came to be Philosophers. *Sophocles* and *Euripides* took the haughty Air of the Theatre, and *Idea's* of Tragedy: *Zeuxis*, *Apelles*, *Polygnotus*, became such excellent Painters; and *Alexander* the Great so valiant. In fine, says *Rapin*, *Homer* has been (if I may so say) the first Founder of all Arts and Sciences, and the Pattern of the Wise Men in all Ages. And as he has been in some manner the Author of *Paganism*, the Religion whereof he establish'd by his *Poems*, one may say, That never Prophet had so many Followers as He. *Rap. Reflex. &c. part. I. sect. 4.*

Sir *Willim Temple* says, That *Homer* was without dispute, the most *Universal-Genius* that has been known in the World, and *Virgil* the most *Accomplish'd*. To the *first* must be allow'd, the most fertile Invention, the richest Vein, the most general Knowledge, and the most lively Expressions; To the *last*, the Noblest Idea's, the justest Institution, the wisest Conduct, and the choicest Elocution. To speak in the *Painters Terms*, says *Temple*, We find in the Works of *Homer*, the most Spirit, Force, and Life; In those of *Virgil*, the best Design, the truest Proportions, and the greatest Grace; The Colouring in *both* seems equal, and indeed, in *both* is admirable. *Homer* had more Fire and Rapture, *Virgil* more Light and Sweetness; or at least the *Poetical Fire* was more raging in *One*, but clearer in the *Other*; Which makes the *first* more amazing, and the *Latter* more agreeable. The *Oare* was richer in *one*, but in *t'other* more refined, and better allay'd, to make up excellent Work. Upon the whole, says *Temple*, I think it must be confessed, that *Homer* was of the two, and, perhaps, of all others, the *Vastest*, the *Sublimest*, and the most *Wonderful Genius*; and that he has been generally so esteem'd, there cannot be a greater Testimony given, than what has been by some observ'd, that not only the greatest Masters have found, in his Works, the best and truest Principles of all their Sciences or Arts; but that the noblest Nations have derived from them the Original of their several Races, though it be hardly yet agreed, whether his Story be true, or Fiction. In short, says *Temple*, These Two Immortal *Poets*, must be allowed to have so much Excelled in their kinds, as to have exceeded all Comparison, to have even extinguish'd Emulation, and in a manner confined *true Poetry*, not only to their Two Languages, but to their very Persons. And I am apt to believe, (says *Temple*) so much of the  
true

true *Genius* of *Poetry* in General, and of its Elevation in these two Particulars, that I know not, whether of all the *Numbers* of Mankind, that live within the compass of a Thousand Years; for one Man that is born Capable of making such a *Poet* as *Homer* or *Virgil*, there may not be a Thousand born Capable of making as great Generals of Armies, or Ministers of State, as any the most Renowned in Story. **Temple's Essay of Poetry**, pag. 18, 19, 20.

*Just as a Changeling seems below the rest  
Of Men, or rather is a Two-legg'd Beast;  
So these \*Gigantick Souls amaz'd we find  
As much above the rest of Humane Kind.  
Nature's whole strength united! Endless Fame,  
And Universal Shouts attend their Name.  
Read Homer once, and you can read no more,  
For all things else appear so dull and poor,  
Verse will seem Prose; yet often on him look,  
And you will hardly need another Book.*

\* Homer  
and  
Virgil.

**Bulgr.** Essay on Poetry.

*'Tis said, that Homer, Matchless in his Art,  
Stole Venus Girdle, to ingage the Heart:  
His Works indeed Vast Treasures do unfold,  
And whatsoe're he touches, turns to Gold:  
All in his hands new beauty does acquire;  
He always pleases, and can never fire.  
A happy warmth he every where may boast;  
Nor is he in too long Digressions lost:  
His Verses without Rule a Method find,  
And of themselves appear in Order join'd:  
All without trouble answers his intent;  
Each Syllable is tending to th' Event.*

*Let*

Let his Example your indeavours raise :  
To Love his Writings, is a kind of Praise.

**Boileau's Art of Poetry**, Englished by Sir  
William Soame.

Monsieur Bayle, in his first Tome of *Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres*, 1684. pag. 87. quotes the Learned Isaac Casaubon, as Author of this Sentence, *Qui Homerum Contemnunt, vix illis optari quidquam pejus potest, quàm ut fatuitate sua fruantur*, That Whoever they are that despise Homer, there cannot be a greater Curse wish'd them, than to be abandoned to their own Folly.

The Criticks, in the *Journal des Sçavans*, Tome 12. pag. 319, 320. tell us, That either those, who in this Age find so many Faults in the Works of *Homer*, must be Men of a very ill Taste, or else that the *Ancients* were much mistaken, when esteeming him the Prince of Poets, they Erected Statues, Built Temples, Rais'd Altars, Offer'd Sacrifice, and also caus'd Medals to be Coin'd, in Honour of him; nay, and that even among the *Christians* there was a sort of *Hereticks*, call'd the *Carpocratians*, who us'd to Adore, and Offer Incense at his Shrine.

*Julius Scaliger*, in his Fifth Book *De Poeticâ*, chap. 2. admiring the extraordinary great Wit of *Homer*, says, There appears so much *Art* in all that he has Writ, that he seems rather to have been the First *Inventer*, than the *Improver* of it; and therefore, without any absurdity it may be said, That it is rather the *Idea* of *Nature*, than *Art*, that appears in *Homer*.

But afterwards he falls very severely upon *Homer*, saying, That his *Narrations* were tedious; his Thoughts and Notions were too Effeminate, and Vulgar; and that they had so little of Sense, or Force in them, that they would

scarce affect his *Scullion*. And, to conclude, he says, That *Homer's Epithets* are generally cold, flat, childish, and unseasonable.

*Borrichius*, in his *Dissert. Acad. De Poetis*, pag. 9. observes, There are Two Faults, which the more knowing sort of Men use to find in *Homer*; The one, that he was not judicious enough in the choice of his *Epithets*, as also that he was too full of his *Digressions*, and insipid *Dialogues*; The other, that he did often Invent and Devise filthy and abominable stories concerning the Gods: The first of these Crimes, says *Borrichius*, might well enough be excused, because *Poetry* was then in its Infancy, and not grown yet to perfection; but the second Crime gave great offence, even to the more considerate sort of *Heathens*. And therefore, hence it was, That *Jerom* the Philosopher in *Diogenes Laertius*, relates, that *Pithagoras*, when he was in Hell, saw the Soul of *Hesiod* fasten'd to a Brass-Pillar, and making a most hideous noise; but at the same time *Homer's* Soul was hanging upon a Tree, encompass'd about with dreadful Serpents; and all this, because they had both of them Writ such Lewd, Scandalous Things, concerning the Divine Nature.

*Theophilus Gale*, in his Third Book, chap. 1. sect. vi. of *The Court of the Gentiles*, remarks, That *Homer* had many of his *Fictions* from some real *Scripture Tradition*, which he gather'd up whilst he was in *Egypt*; Which (says *Gale*) we may safely conjecture, even from his Style, and the Affinity of many of his Expressions with the *Scripture Language*.

And to the same effect, says Sir *Walter Raleigh*, in his First Book, the Sixth Chapter, and the Seventh Section, it cannot be doubted (says he) but that *Homer*,  
had



had read over all the Books of *Moses*, as by Places stollen thence, almost Word for Word, may appear.

And for the more full Evidence hereof, see *Daport's Gnomologia*, or Parallel betwixt *Homer* and the *Scripture*.

*Clemens Alexandrinus*, lib. vi. *Stromatum*, affirms, That *Homer* has taken several Verses Word for Word out of *Orpheus de extincto Baccho*.

*Johannes Lomeierus*, in his Treatise *De Bibliothecis*, cap. iv. makes mention of a *Library* in the Temple of *Vulcan*, at *Memphis*, a City in *Egypt*; Where, as *Naufrates* told the Story, *Homer* happening to find some Books of a certain Woman, called *Phantasia*, and among others the *Iliads* and *Odysses*, which she had Wrote, and plac'd in that Temple; He very fairly took the Confidence to Publish them for his own. But the said *Lomeierus* at the same time assures us, That this Story is utterly false.

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## Quintus Horatius Flaccus,

A Most Illustrious *Latin Lyrick Poet*, Born at *Venusum*, a City in *Italy*; not for the Nobility of his Birth, for he is reported the Son but of a mean person, some say a *Salter*; but for that Delicacy of Wit, Purity of Style, and Weight of Judgment, both in his *Lyricks*, and other Writings, which gain'd him the esteem of the Noblest of Favourites, *Mecænas*, and, by his means, of the greatest Prince upon Earth, *Augustus*; by whom he

was advanc'd to a considerable Estate, whereof he made *Augustus* his Heir. He dyed at *Rome* in the 57. Year of his Age, being the Third Year of the 192. *Olympiad*, six Years before *Christ*.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in *Scaligerana* 1. relates, That the Emperour *Augustus* gave this Character of *Horace*, That he was a very Correct Author.

*Nicolaus Heinſius*, in his Comment upon *Ovid*, ſays, That the *Ancients* gave *Horace* the particular Epithet of *Numerofus*, from his being ſo very exact and accurate in *Numbers*, as his *Lyricks* do ſufficiently teſtifie.

*Quintilian*, lib. x. cap. 1. obſerves, That *Horace* is the Chief at noting the *Manners* of Men; that among all the *Latin Lyrick Poets*, there is ſcarce any but *Horace* who is worth the Reading; for that he hath now and then his Flights and Elevation; his *Stile* is both graceful and agreeable; his Figures and Expreſſions are bold, but at the ſame time happy.

*Monſieur Blondel*, in his Particular Treatiſe, wherein he draws the Parallel betwixt *Horace* and *Pindar*, remarks, That *Horace* was not inferior to *Pindar*; either in reſpect of the Copiouſneſs and Sublimity of his Inventions, or the nobleneſs and boldneſs of his Expreſſions; but that *Horace* was more correct and pure in his Style, than *Pindar*.

He further tells us, That *Horace* has a more Universal Genius, and a more General Knowledge than *Pindar*; as alſo that he is more of a piece, that he has more of Sweetneſs, and is more agreeable; and, in general, that he has fewer faults than *Pindar*.

And, to conclude, he aſſures us, There is not to be found among the *Ancients*, any thing which is more proper, for the imprinting on our Minds true Sentiments of *Moral Honesty*, than the Works of *Horace*.

The

The *German Criticks of Lipsick*, in the *Acta Eruditorum*, Jun. 1684. pag. 262. observe to us, That among the Three Principal *Satyrists* of the *Ancients*, viz *Juvenal*, *Persius*, and *Horace*, this last observ'd the *Medium* between the *Extreams* of the other Two; that is to say, between the *Invectives* of *Juvenal*, which by their extent look like a sort of *Declamation*; and the obscure, and too much constrain'd Brevity of *Persius*. And so they conclude, That *Horace* did as well deserve the chief place among the *Satyrists*, as amongst the *Latin Lyrick Poets*.

*Borrichius*, in his *Dissertat. Acad. De Poetis*, pag. 50. says, That tho' *Horace* himself was not a Man of Chastity, yet that his Style was chaste and pure; that in the *Lyricks* none of the *Latin Poets* ever excell'd him, but that in his *Heroick Poems*, as he abounded with wise *Precepts* and *Admonitions*, so he often fail'd in *Numbers* and *Cadence*. But upon the whole matter, *Borrichius* is of the Opinion, That *Horace* very justly deserves to be reckon'd among the best *Latin Authors*.

*Julius Scaliger*, in his *Hypercritic*. pag. 867. remarks, That *Horace* is the most exact, and Elaborate of all the *Greek* and *Latin Poets*; that his *Lyricks* have both an Harmonious and Majestick sound: Which excellent qualities if they are not to be found in his other Works, one may plainly see, he had no mind to make use of them; and that therefore it can be no prejudice to his Reputation, since it was rather the effect of his Judgment, than his inability, that he did not use them.

He likewise tells us, pag. 879. That *Horace's Odes* are so full of fancy and beauty, so much purity in the style, so great a Variety and such new Turns in the Figures, that they are not only Proof against the Censure of *Criticks*, but also above the highest *Encomium's*; and

and that they are no less to be admir'd for their sublime Style, than for that sweetness and simplicity, which is inherent in them.

*Rapin* tells us, That *Horace* in his *Odes* found the Art to joyn all the force and high Flights of *Pindar*, to all the sweetness and delicacy of *Anacreon*, to make himself a new Character, by uniting the perfections of the other Two. For besides that he had a *Wit* naturally pleasant, it was also great, solid, and sublime; he had nobleness in his Conceits, and delicacy in his Thoughts and Sentiments: The parts of his *Odes* that he was willing to finish, are always *Master-pieces*; but (says *Rapin*) it requires a very clear apprehension to discern all his *Wit*; for there are many *Secret Graces*, and hidden Beauties in his Verse, that very few can discover; He also is the only *Latin* Author who writ well in that Verse amongst the *Ancients*; and none could ever follow him, his *Genius* went so high. *Rap. Reflex. on Aristotle's Treat. of Poesie, part 2. sect. 30.*

*Dryden* says, That if we take *Horace* in parts, he is chiefly to be consider'd in his Three different Talents, as he was a *Critick*, a *Satyrist*, and a *Writer of Odes*. His *Morals* are uniform, and run through all of them; For let his *Dutch Commentators* say what they will, his Philosophy was *Epicurean*; and he made use of *Gods* and *Providence*, only to serve a turn in *Poetry*. But (says *Dryden*) since neither his *Criticisms*, (which are the most instructive of any that are written in this Art,) nor his *Satyrs*, (which are incomparably beyond *Juvenal's*, if to laugh and rally, is to be preferr'd to railing and declaiming,) are no part of my present undertaking, I confine my self wholly to his *Odes*: These are also of several sorts; some of them are *Panegyrical*, others *Moral*, the rest *Jovial*, or (if I may so call them) *Bacchanalian*.

*Bacchanalian.* As difficult as *Horace* makes it, and as indeed it is, to imitate *Pindar*, yet in his most elevated flights, and in the sudden changes of his Subject, with almost imperceptible Connexions, that *Theban Poet* is his Master. But *Horace*, says *Dryden*, is of the more bounded Fancy, and confines himself strictly to one sort of Verse, or *Stanza* in every *Ode*. That which will distinguish his Style from all other Poets, is the Elegance of his Words, and the Numerousness of his Verse; there is nothing so delicately turn'd in all the Roman Language. There appears (says *Dryden*) in every part of his *Diction*, or (to speak *English*) in all his Expressions, a kind of noble and bold Purity. His Words are chosen with as much exactness as *Virgil's*; but there seems to be a greater Spirit in them. There is a secret Happiness attends his Choice, which in *Petronius* is call'd *Curiosa Felicitas*, and which I suppose (says *Dryden*) he had from the *Feliciter audere* of *Horace* himself. But the most distinguishing part of all his Character, seems to be his Briskness, his Jolity, and his good Humour. And those (says *Dryden*) I have chiefly endeavour'd to Copy; his other Excellencies, I confess, are above my Imitation. *Dryd. Pref. to Sylvæ: Or, the 2d Part of Poetical Miscellanies.*

A late Anonymous German Author in his *Bibliograph. Curios. Histor. Philologic. pag. 46.* remarks; That *Horace's* Book, *De Arte Poeticâ*, which really is no more than an *Epistle* to the Two *Piso's*, is an Excellent Piece of Criticism, as well as his other *Epistles* and *Satyrs*; but yet, that it is not a Work so well finish'd, and perfect-ed, as one might reasonably have expected from the hand of so great a Master.

*Gerardus Johannes Vossius*, in his *De Arte Poeticâ, cap. 14. sect. 1.* says, That the *Oeconomy* which *Horace* hath observ'd

observ'd in his *De Arte Poeticâ* is not very regular, nor exact; that all that he minded, was to heap together a great many Rules and Precepts, without regarding their Order, or Method.

*Rapin*, in the *Advertisement* before his *Reflexions* on *Aristotle's* Treatise of *Poesie*, observes to us, that *Horace's* Piece *De Arte Poeticâ*, is no more than an Interpretation of *Aristotle's* Treatise of *Poesie*; and that *Horace* was the first who propos'd this great Model to the *Romans*.

And in another place *Rapin* tells us, That *Horace*, who was the first Interpreter of *Aristotle*, in his Book *De Arte Poeticâ*, has observ'd as little Method as *Aristotle* did; because (perhaps) it was writ in an *Epistle*, whose Character ought to be free, and without constraint. *Rap. Reflex &c. part 1. sect. xvii.*

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## Benjamin Johnson.

**T**His Renowned Poet was born in the City of Westminster, his Mother living in *Harts-Horn Lane*, near *Charing Cross*, where she Married a *Bricklayer* for her Second Husband. But tho' he sprang from mean Parents, yet his admirable Parts have made him more famous, than those of a more conspicuous Extraction. Nor do I think it any diminution to him, That he was Son-in-Law to a *Bricklayer*, and work'd at that Trade; since if we take a survey of the Records of Antiquity, we shall find the greatest Poets of the meanest Birth, and most liable to the Inconveniencies of Life. Witness  
*Homer,*

*Homer*, who begg'd from door to door; *Euripides*, traded in Herbs with his Mother; *Plautus* was forc'd to serve a Baker; *Nævius* was a Captain's Man; *Terence* was a Slave to the generous *Lucan*; *Virgil*, was the Son of a Basket-Maker: And yet these thought the obscurity of their Extraction no diminution to their Worth; Nor will any Man of Sense reflect on *Ben. Johnson* on this account, if he seriously call to mind that saying of *Juvenal* in his Eighth Satyr:

——— *Nobilitas sola est, atque unica Virtus.*

He was first bred at a Private School, in *St. Martin's Church*, then plac'd at *Westminster*, under the famous *Mr. Cambden*, (to whom in gratitude he dedicated his fourteenth *Epigram*) afterwards he was sent to *St. John's Colledge* in *Cambridge*; from thence he remov'd to *Oxford*, and was enter'd of *Christ-Church Colledge*; where in the Year 1619. (as *Mr. Wood* says) he took his Master of Arts Degree: Tho' *Dr. Fuller* says, He continued there but few Weeks, for want of Maintenance, being fain to return to the Trade of his Father-in-Law; where he assisted in the New Building of *Lincolne's Inn*, with a Trowel in his Hand, and a Book in his Pocket. But this *English Maro*, was not long before he found a *Mæcenas* and a *Varus*, to free him from so slavish an Employment, and furnish him with Means to enjoy his *Muse at liberty*, in private. 'Twas then that he writ his Excellent Plays, and grew into Reputation with the most Eminent of our *Nobility*, and *Gentry*. 'Twas then, that *Carthwright*, *Randolph*, and others of both *Universities*, sought his *Adoption*; and gloried more in his Friendship, and the Title of his *Sons*, than in their own well-deserv'd Characters. Neither did he less love, or

was less belov'd by the Famous Poets of his Time, *Shakespear*, *Beaumont*, and *Fletcher*.

He was generally esteem'd a Man of a very free Temper, and withal Blunt, and somewhat haughty to those, that were either Rivals in Fame, or Enemies to his Writings, (witness his *Poetaster*, wherein he falls upon *Decker*, and his answer to Dr. *Gill*, who writ against his *Magnetick Lady*,) otherwise of a good sociable Humour, when amongst his *Sons* and *Friends* in the *Apollo*.

He has writ Fifty Plays in all, whereof Fifteen are *Comedies*, Three are *Tragedies*, the rest are *Masques* and *Entertainments*: And besides these, (for he is not wholly *Dramatick*,) there are his *Underwoods*, *Epigrams*, &c.

*Winstanley*, in *The Lives of the most Famous English Poets*, says, That *Ben. Johnson* was paramount in the *Dramatick* part of *Poetry*, and taught the Stage an exact conformity to the *Laws of Comedians*, being accounted the most Learned, Judicious, and Correct of all the *English Poets*; and the more to be admir'd for being so, for that neither the height of Natural Parts, for he was no *Shakespear*; nor the Cost of extraordinary Education, but his own proper Industry, and Application to Books, advanc'd him to this perfection.

He likewise tells us, That *Johnson's* Plays were above the Vulgar Capacity, and took not so well at the first *Stroke*, as at the rebound, when beheld the second time; yea, that they will endure Reading, and that with due Commendation, so long as either Ingenuity or Learning are fashionable in our Nation. And altho' all his Plays may endure the Test, yet in Three of his *Comedies*, namely, *The Fox*, *Alchymist*, and *Silent Woman*, he may be compar'd, in the Judgment of Learned Men,

for



for *Decorum*, *Language*, and *Humour*, as well with the Chief of the *Ancient Greek* and *Latin Comedians*, as the Prime of *Modern Italians*, who have been judg'd the best of *Europe* for a happy Vein in *Comedies*; Nor is his *Bartholomew-Fair* much short of them. As for his other *Comedies*, *Staple of News*, *Devil's an Ass*, and the rest, if they be not (says *Winstanley*) so sprightly and vigorous as his *first Pieces*, all that are Old, *will*, and all that desire to be Old, *should* excuse him therein; and therefore let the Name of *Ben. Johnson* shield them against whoever shall think fit to be severe in Censure against them. The truth is, says *Winstanley*, his *Tragedies*, *Sejanus*, and *Cataline* seem to have in them more of an *Artificial* and *Inflate*, than of a *Pathetical* and *naturally Tragick Height*; yet do they far excel any of the *English* ones, that were writ before him; so that *He* may be truly said, to be the *first Reformer* of the *English Stage*.

In the rest of his *Poetry*, (for he is not wholly *Dramatick*,) as his *Underwoods*, *Epigrams*, &c. He is (says *this Author*) sometimes bold and strenuous, sometimes *Magisterial*, sometimes lepid and full enough of *Conceit*, and sometimes a Man as other Men are.

*Dryden* tells us, That if we look upon *Johnson* while he was *himself*, (for his last Plays were but his *Dottages*,) he thinks him the most Learned and Judicious Writer which any Theatre ever had. He was a most severe Judge of himself as well as others. One cannot say he wanted Wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his Works you find little to retrench or alter. *Wit* and *Language*, and *Humour* also in some measure we had before him; but something of *Art* was wanting to the *Drama* till he came. He manag'd his Strength to more advantage than any who preceeded

him. You seldom find him making love in any of his Scenes, or endeavouring to move the Passions; his *Genius* was too sullen and Saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he knew he came after those who had perform'd both to such an height. *Humour* was his proper Sphere, and in that he delighted most to represent *Mechanick* People. He was deeply Conversant in the *Ancients*, both *Greek* and *Latin*, and he borrow'd boldly from them: There is scarce a *Poet* or *Historian* among the *Roman* Authors of those times whom he has not Translated in *Sejanus* and *Catiline*. But he has done his Robberies so openly, that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any Law. He invades Authors like a Monarch, and what would be Theft in other Poets, is only Victory in him. With the Spoils of these Writers he so represents *Old Rome* to us, in its Rites, Ceremonies and Customs, that if one of *their* Poets had written *either* of his *Tragedies*, we had seen less of it than in *him*. If there was any fault in his *Language*, 'twas that he weav'd it too closely and laboriously, in his *Comedies* especially: Perhaps too, he did a little too much *Romanize* our Tongue, leaving the Words which he Translated almost as much *Latin* as he found them: Wherein tho' he learnedly followed *their* Language, he did not enough comply with the Idiom of *Ours*. If (says *Dryden*) I would compare *him* with *Shakespear*, I must acknowledge *him* the more correct Poet, but *Shakespear* the greater Wit. *Shakespear* was the *Homer*; or Father of our *Dramatick* Poets; *Johnson* was the *Virgil*, the pattern of Elaborate Writing; I admire *him*, says *Dryden*, but I love *Shakespear*. To conclude, as he has given us the most Correct Plays, so in the precepts which he has laid down in his Discoveries, We have as many and profitable Rules for perfecting the Stage, as  
any

any wherewith the *French* can furnish us. *Dryd. Essay of Dramatick Poesie, pag. 34, 35.*

*Dryden*, in his *Postscript to Granada*, calls *Ben Johnson*, *The most Judicious of Poets and Inimitable Writer*, yet, he says, his Excellency lay in the low Characters of Vice, and Folly. When at any time (says he) *Ben.* aim'd at Wit in the stricter Sense, that is sharpness of Conceit, he was forc'd to borrow from the *Ancients*, (as to my knowledge he did very much from *Plautus*;) Or When he trusted himself alone, often fell into meanness of Expression. Nay, he was not free from the lowest and most groveling kind of Wit, which we call *Clenches*: Of which every Man in his Humour is infinitely full, and which is worse, the Wittiest Persons in the Drama speak them.

*Dryden*, in another place, allows, That *Ben. Johnson* is to be admir'd for many Excellencies; and can be tax'd with fewer failings, than any *English Poet*. I know, says *Dryden*, I have been accus'd as an Enemy of his Writings; but without any other Reason, than that I do not admire him blindly, and without looking into his Imperfections. For why should he only be exempted from those frailties, from which *Homer* and *Virgil* are not free? Or, why should there be any *Ipse dixit* in our Poetry, any more than there is in our Philosophy. I admire and applaud him (says *Dryden*) where I ought: Those who do more, do but value themselves in their admiration of him; and by telling you they extol *Ben. Johnson's* way, would insinuate to you, that they can practise it. For my part, says *Dryden*, I declare that I want Judgment to imitate him: And should think it a great impudence in my self to attempt it. To make Men appear pleasantly ridiculous on the Stage, was, as I have said, his Talent: And in this he needed not the *Acumen* of Wit, but that of Judgment.

For

For the Characters and Representations of Folly are only the effects of Observation; and Observation is an effect of Judgment. Some Ingenious Men, for whom (says Dryden) I have a particular esteem, have thought I have much injur'd Ben. Johnson, when I have not allow'd his Wit to be extraordinary: But they confound the Notion of what is Witty, with what is pleasant. That Ben Johnson's Plays were pleasant, he must want reason who denies: But that pleasantness (says Dryden) was not properly Wit, or the sharpness of Conceit; but the natural imitation of Folly: Which I confess to be excellent in its Kind, but not to be of that kind which they pretend. Yet if we will believe Quintilian, in his Chapter *De Movendo Rifu*, he gives his Opinion of Both in these following Words, *Stulta reprehendere facillimum est; nam per se sunt ridicula: & à derisu non procul abest risus: Sed rem Urbanam facit aliqua ex nobis adjectio.* Dryd. Pref. to the Mock-Astrologer.

Shadwell, in his Dedication before the *Vertuoso*, says, That Johnson was incomparably the best Dramatick Poet that ever was, or, he believes, ever will be; and that he had rather be Author of one Scene in his best Comedies, than of any Play this Age has produc'd.

Notwithstanding the general Vogue of Ben. Johnson, yet we finde a most severe Satyr against his *Magnetick Lady*, Writ by Dr. Gill, Master of Pauls School, or at least his Son: Part of which I shall take the pains to Transcribe:

*But to advise thee Ben, in this strict Age,  
A Brick-hill's better for thee than a Stage.  
Thou better know'st a Groundsill for to lay,  
Than lay the Plot, or Ground-work of a Play,*

*And*

*And better can'st direct to Cap a Chimney,  
Than to converse with Clio, or Polyhimny.*

*Fall then to work in thy Old Age again,  
Take up thy Trug and Trowel, gentle Ben,  
Let Plays alone; or if thou needs will Write,  
And thrust thy feeble Muse into the Light;  
Let Lowen cease, and Taylor scorn to touch  
The loathed Stage, for thou hast made it such.*

*Ben. Johnson's Answer to the said Verses.*

*Shall the prosperity of a Pardon still  
Secure thy railing Rhymes, Infamous Gill,  
At Libelling? Shall no Star-Chamber Peers,  
Pillory, nor Whip, nor want of Ears,  
All which thou hast incurr'd deservedly:  
Nor degradation from the Ministry,  
To be the Denis of thy Father's School,  
Keep in thy bawling Wit, thou bawling Fool.  
Thinking to stir me, thou hast lost thy end,  
I'll Laugh at thee poor wretched Tike, go send  
Thy Blotant Muse abroad, and teach it rather  
A Tune to drown the Ballads of thy Father:  
For thou hast nought to cure his Fame,  
But Tune and Noise the Eccho of his Shame.  
A Rogue by Statute, censur'd to be Whipt,  
Cropt, branded, slipt, neck-stockt; go, you are stript.*

The haughty Humour of *Johnson* was blam'd, and Carpt at by several, but by none more Ingeniously, than by *Sir John Suckling*, who arraign'd him at the Sessions of Poets in this manner:

*The*

*The first that broke silence was good Old Ben,  
 Prepar'd before with Canary Wine;  
 And he told them plainly that he deserv'd the Bays,  
 For his were call'd Works, where others were but Plays;  
 And,*

*Bid them remember how he had purg'd the Stage  
 Of Errors that had lasted many an Age:  
 And he hop'd they did not think, the Silent Woman,  
 The Fox, and the Alchymist, out done by no Man.*

*Apollo stopt him there, and bid him not go on,  
 'Twas Merit, he said, and not Presumption  
 Must carry't; at which Ben. turn'd about,  
 And in great choller offer'd to go out:*

*But,*

*Those that were there, thought it not fit  
 To discontent so Ancient a Wit;  
 And therefore Apollo call'd him back agen,  
 And made him mine Host of his own New-Inn.*

*Ben. Johnson died Anno Dom. 1637. in the Sixty Third  
 Year of his Age, and was buried in St. Peters Church  
 in Westminster, on the West-side near the Belfry; hav-  
 ing only a plain Stone over his Grave, with this Inscrip-  
 tion,*

*O Rare BEN. JOHNSON.*

*Decius*

## Decius Junius Juvenalis,

**A** Most Elegant *Latin Satyrift*, (as appears by his *Sxteen Satyrs*, which are Extant,) born at *Aquinam* in the Kingdom of *Naples*; He flourish'd in the time of the Emperour *Domitian*; who for Reflecting upon *Paris*, a Comedian and Favourite, was in the Eightieth Year of his Age sent Captain of a Company into *Egypt*, whence he is call'd by *Sidonius Apollinaris*, *I-rati Histrionis Exul*.

*Ammianus Marcellinus*, *lib. 28. Histor.* says, That in his time *Juvenal* was so much in Vogue, that even some who did detest Learning, did notwithstanding in their most profound retiredness, diligently employ themselves in Reading his Works.

To omit *Suidas*, and some others of the *Ancients*, which mention him, *Porphyrio* the Commentator on *Horace*, confesses that *Horace* had excell'd, had not *Juvenal* writ.

*Lipsius*, *Cent. 11. Miscell. Epist. 62.* reckons *Juvenal* amongst the most useful sort of Writers.

And again, *lib. iv. Epistolic. Quæstion. Epist. 15.* *Lipsius* tells us, That never any *Satyrift* excell'd *Juvenal* in correcting the ill Manners of Men.

*Conradus Rittershusius*, *lib. 1. Lect. Sacr. cap. x.* says, That *Juvenal* is so full of his Divine, Grave Sentences, that he may very properly be call'd, *The Prophet of the Latin Poets*.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in his *Scaligerana* 1. pag. 95. assures us, That *Juvenal* is an Excellent Poet, and that he has a great many fine Things; that his *Satyr*s are truly

Q

Tragical;

*Tragical*; but I cannot but wonder, says *Scaliger*, why he should say, that he wrote in the Style of *Lucilius*, since never any thing was more unlike either *that*, or *Horace's* Style.

*Farnaby*, in the *Epistle Dedicatory* to the Prince of Wales, before his Translation of *Juvenal*, says, That many prefer'd *Juvenal's* Satyrs before all the *Morals* of *Aristotle*, nay, and that they thought them equal to those of *Seneca*, and *Epictetus*.

He likewise informs us, There are several *Criticks*, who give the precedence to *Juvenal* before *Horace*; esteeming the latter but as a slight, superficial *Satyrst*, who only laugh from the teeth outwards; whereas *Juvenal* bit to the very bone, and did not often suffer his Prey to escape without strangling, and being put to Death.

Sir Robert Stapleton, in the Preface to his Translation of *Juvenal*, remarks, That this Author is commended by Learned Men for the best *Satyrst*; whence he is styled, *That Censor Morum Liberrimus*. He is also a rare Poet, as is testified by his Verse, flowing like a River, when the Wind breaths gently, smooth near the Banks, strong in the Current. He was a true *Philosopher*, who with inimitable sweetness of Language, and Majesty of Sentences, sets before our Eyes (says Stapleton) the loveliness of *Virtue*, and the deformity of *Vice*.

*Julius Scaliger*, lib. 6. *De Poeticâ*, calls *Horace* a Scoffer, his Speech Vulgar, his Verse negligent, only his *Latin* pure. But *Juvenal*, says he, *ardet, instat, apertè jugulat*; his Purity is *Roman*, his Composure happy, his Verse better, his Sentences sharper, his Phrase more open, and his Satyr more accurate. *Horace*, says he, did not more exceed *Lucilius*, than *Juvenal* *Horace*; whether we respect the variety of Arguments, the dexterity



dexterity of Handling, the plenty of Invention, the frequency of Sentences, the sharpness of Reprehension, as also his Raillery, and good Manners. pag. 838, and 872.

*Barten Holyday*, in the Pref. to his Translation of *Juvenal*, observes, That in the same Arguments *Juvenal* never came short of *Horace*, but often out-went him; that *Juvenal*'s Eighth Satyr of *True Nobility*, is far more excellent, than, of the same Argument, *Horace*'s Sixth. Compare, says he, *Juvenal*'s Tenth with *Horace*'s First, of *The Desires of Men*, (let *Julius Scaliger* speak the Close in his own Words,) *Sanè ille tibi Juvenalis Poeta videbitur, hic Horatius jejunæ cujuspiam Theseos tenuis tentator*; surely thou wilt acknowledge *Juvenal* to be a *Poet*, but *Horace* to be some poor *Theme-Maker*. *Lipsius* readily approves of this Opinion, saying of *Scaliger*, *Ille, me judice, inter multa certi & elegantis judicii, nihil verius protulit*; preferring *Juvenal* before *Horace*, for his Ardor, his Loftiness, and his Freedom. And for my own part, says *Holyday*, tho' I willingly admire the happiness of *Horace* in his *Lyricks*, yet I cannot but think he very much untun'd himself in his fall from the *Ode* to the *Satyr*. Besides, *Juvenal*'s Change of the *Ancient Satyr*, was, methinks, not only a *Change*, but a *Perfection*. For, says *Holyday*, what is the End of *Satyr*, but to *Reform*? Whereas a perpetual *Grin* does rather *Anger* than *Mend*. Wherefore the *Old Satyr* and the *New*, and so *Horace* and *Juvenal*, may seem to differ as the *Jester* and the *Orator*, the Face of an *Ape* and of a *Man*, or as the *Fiddle* and *Thunder*.

*Juvenal*, says *Dryden*, is of a more Vigorous and Masculine Wit, than *Horace*; he gives me as much pleasure as I can bear: He fully satisfies my Expectation, he treats his Subject home: His Spleen is rais'd, and he

raises mine: I have the Pleasure of Concernment in all he says; He drives his Reader along with him; and when he is (says *Dryden*) at the end of his way, I willingly stop with him: If he went another Stage, it would be too far, it would make a Journey of a Progress, and turn Delight into Fatigue. When he gives over, 'tis a sign the Subject is exhausted; and the Wit of Man can carry it no farther. If a Fault can be justly found in him, 'tis (says *Dryden*) that he is sometimes too luxuriant, too redundant; says more than he needs, but never more than pleases. Add to this, that his Thoughts are as just as those of *Horace*, and much more Elevated. His Expressions are Sonorous, and more Noble; his Verse more Numerous, and his Words are suitable to his Thoughts; sublime and lofty. All these contribute to the Pleasure of the Reader, and the greater the Soul of him who Reads, his Transports are the greater. *Horace*, says *Dryden*, is always on the *Amble*, *Juvenal* on the *Gallop*: But his way is perpetually on Carpet-Ground. He goes with more Impetuosity than *Horace*; but as securely; and the swiftness adds a more lively agitation to the Spirits.—The Sauce of *Juvenal* is more poignant to create in us an Appetite of Reading him. The Meat of *Horace* is more nourishing; but the Cookery of *Juvenal* more exquisite; so that, granting *Horace* to be the more general *Philosopher*; we cannot deny, that *Juvenal* was the greater Poet, I mean in *Satyr*. His Thoughts, says *Dryden*, are sharper, his Indignation against Vice is more vehement; his Spirit has more of the Commonwealth Genius; he treats *Tyranny*, and all the Vices attending it, as they deserve, with the utmost rigour: And consequently, a Noble Soul is better pleas'd with a zealous Vindicator of *Roman* liberty;

ty; than with a Temporizing Poet, a well Manner'd Court Slave, and a Man who is often afraid of laughing in the right place: Who is ever decent, because he is naturally servile. After all, says *Dryden*, *Horace* had the disadvantage of the Times in which he liv'd; they were better for the *Man*, but worse for the *Satyr*ist. 'Tis generally said, that those Enormous Vices, which were practis'd under the Reign of *Domitian*, were unknown in the time of *Augustus Cæsar*. That therefore *Juvenal* had a larger Field, than *Horace*. *Dryd. De-dic.* before the *Translat. of Juvenal*, pag. 37, 38, 39.

*Rapin* observes, That the *Delicacy* which properly gives the relish to *Satyr*, was heretofore the Character of *Horace*, for that it was only by the way of *Jest* and Merriment that he exercis'd his *Censure*. For he knew full well, that the sporting of Wit, hath more effect than the strongest Reasons, and the most sententious Discourse, to render *Vice ridiculous*. In which *Juvenal*, says *Rapin*, with all his seriousness, has so much ado to succeed. For indeed that violent manner of Declamation, which throughout he makes use of, has, most commonly, as *Rapin* remarks, but very little Effect, he scarce perswades at all; because he is always in *choler*, and never speaks in *Cold Blood*. 'Tis true, says *Rapin*, he has some *Common Places* of *Morality*, that may serve to dazzle the weaker sort of Apprehensions: But with all his strong Expressions, *energetick* Terms, and great Flashes of Eloquence, he makes little impression; because he has nothing that is *delicate*, or that is *natural*. It is not a true Zeal, as *Rapin* observes, that makes *Juvenal* talk against the misdemeanors of that Age, 'tis merely a Spirit of Vanity and Ostentation. *Rap. Reflex. &c. part 2. sect. 28.*

*Lubin's* Comments upon *Juvenal* and *Persius*, Printed *Hanovæ*, 1603. are Inserted in the *Index Expurgatorius*, Published at *Madrid*, Anno Dom. 1667.

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## Marcus Annæus Lucanus,

A Famous Poet, born at *Corduba*, a City in *Spain*, in the 37th. or, as others say, the 39th. Year of *Christ*. He was the Son of *Marcus Annæus Mella*, of *Corduba*, a Roman Knight; and Nephew to *Lucius Annæus Seneca*, the Philosopher. He was taken in the *Pisonian* Conspiracy, and put to Death by *Nero*, in the 26th. Year of his Age.

He Wrote the *History* of the *Civil Wars* between *Cæsar* and *Pompey*, in *Hexameter Verse*; the Poem is Entituled *Pharsalia*, wherein he is said, to have been assisted by his Wife *Polla Argentaria*.

There have been but few more expos'd to the Censure of *Criticks*, than this our Author. Some making him to be an Excellent Poet; Others an indifferent Historian; Some a furious Orator; and Others a Philosopher, a Mathematician, and a Divine.

*Quintilian*, lib. x. cap. 1. observes, That *Lucan* has a great deal of Heat and Fire; and that he is very remarkable for his Sentences; but, says he, to speak my mind freely, he is rather to be number'd amongst Orators than Poets.

*Servius*, in his Comment upon *Virgil's* First Book of his *Æneids*, Verse 281. is also of the Opinion, that *Lucan* did

did not deserve to be reckon'd among the *Poets*, because he seems to have Writ rather a *History* than a *Poem*.

And *Johannes Sarisberiensis*, *lib. 2. Policratici*, *cap. xix.* calls *Lucan* a most learned *Poet*; if, says he, it be proper to call him a *Poet*, who, by his truly Relating Matters of Fact, appears to be more of the *Historian*.

But we find *Martial* took *Lucan* to be not only a *Poet*, but a very good one too; according to that *Epigram* of his, *lib. 14. Epig. 194.*

*Sunt Quidam, qui me dicunt non esse Poetam:  
Sed qui me vendit, Bibliopola, putat.*

And *Julius Scaliger*, *lib. 1. Poetices*, *cap. 11.* says, It is beyond all dispute, that *Lucan* was a *Poet*; and that the *Grammarians* do but trifle, (as they commonly do) when they object, and say, That he wrote not a *Poem* but a *History*.

*Nicolaus Clemangius*, *Epist. v.* tells us, That *Lucan* gave an excellent Description of the *Civil Wars*; and that he was very well skill'd both in *Astronomy* and *Philosophy*.

*Philippus Rubenicus*, *lib. 2. Electorum*, *cap. 5.* says, He Loves *Lucan* for having so great a Soul; who, though he liv'd in times of Slavery and Tyranny, yet scorn'd to shew any thing that was either Mean, or Servile.

*Casper Barthius*, *lib. 53. Adversar. cap. 6.* informs us, That *Lucan* is a *Poet* of a great *Genius*, of extraordinary Learning, and of a true *Heroick Character*; who, from the very time he liv'd, has always been esteem'd a most Considerable Author, especially among *Philosophers*, by Reason of his gravity, his force, his acuteness, and his weighty Sentences, which shine, and are transparent through

through the whole Work ; so that he has scarce ever had his equal in that Kind.

But notwithstanding *Barthius* has given this high Character of *Lucan*, yet in another place, viz. *lib. 60. Advers. cap. v.* he shews us, That his good Qualities have been ballanc'd by his great imperfections: Thus, *he says, Lucan* was a mortal Enemy to *Cæsar*, and his Family ; and that under pretence of speaking for *Liberty*, he had no other design, than to establish the Passion and Ambition of some few particular Persons of his Time, who had a mind to get the Government solely into their own hands ; or, since they could not bear any longer with their Lawful Prince, were rather disposed to submit themselves to any other whatsoever, than to *Cæsar* ; who, by overthrowing the Commonwealth, had taken away all their *Liberties*, only to invest himself with an Absolute, *Despotick* Power.

*He* also further declares, That *Lucan* was a rash, giddy-headed Young Fellow, and that he Writ without any thing of Judgement ; that he knew not how to manage the Characters of those, whom he represented ; but that he generally gave them his own vain, idle, and furious Character.

But this great *Freedom* us'd by *Lucan*, and which *Barthius* takes to be the effect of his want of Judgement, the Learned *Daniel Heinsius*, in his Book *De laude Asini*, pag. 86, 87. interprets quite otherwise, for he supposes, and believes, it proceeded from a true *Roman* Spirit, and that it had no other cause, but his own Noble and Generous Temper.

*Monsieur Godeau*, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, and towards the end of the *First Century*, says, That *Lucan* had without doubt a great *Genius*, and a high and lofty Spirit, as particularly appears in his *Descriptions* ; but  
that

that he had the ordinary Vice of Young Men, which is, not to know how to govern himself.

He also adds, That as *some* have too great an esteem for him, so *Others* blame him more than he deserves; for that as he has his Vices, so it cannot be deny'd, but he has his Vertues too.

*Julius Scaliger*, lib. 6. *De Poetica*, pag. 844. remarks, That there are some, who have the confidence to compare *Lucan* with *Virgil*; but these, says he, instead of Magnifying *Lucan*, do but expose themselves.

We confess, says *Scaliger*, That *Lucan* was one of a vast Genius; but at the same time we must acknowledge that he would often go beyond the bounds of *Poetry*; that he had an ungovernable Temper, and would now and then sally out most extravagantly; and to conclude, that he had too much heat and fire in him, wanting that admirable and Divine Temper, which none ever had but *Virgil* only. And therefore, says *Scaliger*, though I may be thought to use too great a freedom, *Lucan* rather seems to *Bark* than *Sing*, in my Opinion.

And in another place of the same Book, viz. pag. 717. *Scaliger* observes, That *Lucan* was too much embarrass'd, and confus'd in his Thoughts, and that he was often running from one Extream to another.

*Lilius Gyraldus*, in his fourth Dialogue, *De Poetis Antiquis*, affirms the very same thing of *Lucan*, that *M. Tullius* did of the *Corduban* Poets of his time, who, as he thought, had somewhat in them, that was extremely odd and uncouth. And therefore, as *Gyraldus* observes, One very ingeniously compar'd *Lucan*, to a Horse that was not broke, which would ever and anon be running in the midst of some Meadow, or Field, leaping, and

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kicking up his heels, but without any manner of Order, or Art.

Others, says *Gyraldus*, compar'd him to a Brisk, Active Souldier, who would fling his dart with a vast deal of strength, though at the same time, he ne'er consider'd to take any aim.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in his first Book, *Epist.* 3. says, That if one looks narrowly into *Lucan*, he will find him to be a Man of no skill in *Astronomy*; and that he was a light, trifling, vain-glorious young Man.

*Borrichius*, in his *Dissertat. Acad. de Poetis*, pag. 58. remarks, That *Lucan's Pharsalia*, is of a Masculine Style, too much set out with Sentences, and Political Instructions, but that now and then it was somewhat rough and uneven; nay, and sometimes haughty, and affected. *Borrichius* can by no means approve of *Scaliger's* Censure, viz. That *Lucan* seems rather to Bark than Sing; but is of Opinion, That had he not been cut off so soon, he would most certainly have polish'd this new Work of his.

*Petronius* (says *Rapin*, in his *Advertisement* before his *Reflexions on Poesie*) is disgusted with the Stile of *Seneca* and *Lucan*, which to him seem'd affected, and contrary to the Principles of *Aristotle*. 'Tis at them he levels with those glances, that slip from him against the *Poetasters*, and false *Declamators*.

*Philippus Brietius*, in his Second Book, *De Poetis Latinis*, tells us, That *Lucan* affected to speak nothing, but what was very great, and extraordinary; and hence it is, that his Style is so very lofty, irregular, and obscure.

He also advises *Masters* not to suffer their *Scholars* to read *Lucan*; for that, in his Opinion, never any Poet had so dangerously corrupted *Poetry*.

*Rapin*



*Rapin* says, That *Lucan* often in his *Pharsalia* grows flat for want of Wit. *Rap. Reflex. on Arist. of Poesie, part 1. sect. 2.*

He also observes, That the *Episodes* of *Lucan*, who makes long *Scholastick* Dissertations, and Disputes meerly *Speculative*, on things that fall in his way, shew much of Constraint and affectation. *Ibid. part 2. sect. 8.*

And, to conclude, he tells us, That *Lucan* is great and sublime, but as little Judgment. *Ibid. sect. 15.*

*Dryden* remarks, That *Lucan* follow'd too much the truth of History; crowded Sentences together; was too full of Points; and too often offer'd at somewhat which had more of the Sting of an *Epigram*, than of the dignity and state of an *Heroick Poem*. *Lucan*, says *Dryden*, us'd not much the help of his *Heathen Deities*: There was neither the Ministry of the Gods, nor the precipitation of the Soul, nor the fury of a Prophet, in his *Pharsalia*: He treats you more like a *Philosopher*, than a *Poet*: and instructs you in *Verse*, with what he had been taught by his Uncle *Seneca* in *Prose*. In one Word, says *Dryden*, he walks soberly a foot, when he might fly: Yet *Lucan* is not always this Religious Historian. The Oracle of *Appius*, and the Witchcraft of *Erietho* will somewhat atone for him, who was, indeed, bound up by an ill chosen and known Argument, to follow Truth with great Exactness. *Dryd. Essay of Heroick Plays.*

*Dryden*, also in his *Apology for Heroick Poetry*, observes, That *Lucan* and *Statius* were Men of an unbounded Imagination, but that they often wanted the Poize of Judgment.

And in his *Dedication* before *Juvenal*, he says, That *Lucan* is wanting both in *Design* and *Subject*, and is besides too full of Heat, and Affectation, *pag. viii.*

## Caius Lucilius,

**A** Roman Poet, of the *Equestrian Order*, the first that writ *Satyr*s in *Latin*, the great Uncle of *Pompey*, born at *Aurunca*, a Town in *Italy*. He was a Souldier under *Scipio Africanus*, when he besieg'd *Numantia* in *Spain*; He died at *Naples*, in the Forty Sixth Year of his Age.

That *Lucilius* was the first who writ *Satyr* amongst the *Romans*, appears by these following Verses of *Boileau*, in his *Art of Poetry*, thus render'd into *English*:

*Lucilius was the Man who, bravely bold,  
To Roman Vices did this Mirror hold,  
Protected humble Goodness from reproach,  
Show'd Worth on Foot and Rascals in the Coach:  
Horace his pleasing Wit to this did add,  
And none uncensur'd could be Fool, or Mad;  
Unhappy was that Wretch, whose name might be  
Squar'd to the Rules of their Sharp Poetry.*

*Boileau* of *Satyr*, in his *Art of Poetry*.

*Horace*, lib. 1. *Satyr* iv. says, That *Lucilius* design'd to imitate the Ancient *Greek Comedians*, who reflected upon Persons nakedly, without any Art or Disguise; and that among others he had follow'd *Eupolis*, *Cratinus*, and *Aristophanes*, not making any other alteration, than changing the Feet, and Measure of their Verse. He adds, that *Lucilius* is very pleasant and agreeable, and one of a very good Taste; but that his Verse was rough, and wanted the file. He also tells us, that *Lucilius*

*Lucilius* would commonly make two Hundred Verses in an hours time, standing all the while upon one Leg, which was a thing very extraordinary ; but that his Verses had neither force, nor purity. To conclude, *he says*, that *Lucilius* was a Man full of Words, and that he could not endure to take much pains.

But notwithstanding this Character of *Horace*, we see *Quintilian*, *lib. x. cap. 1.* tells us, That *Lucilius* was the first amongst the *Romans*, who had got any Reputation for writing *Satyr* ; and that he was arriv'd to so great Credit, and such a Fame, That there are Many, who prefer him before all other *Poets* in general. But, says *Quintilian*, I differ as much from *Them*, as I do from *Horace*, who compares *Lucilius* to a River, which carries with it a great deal of Filth and Mud, but yet has somewhat that is good in it. For says *Quintilian*, there is in *Lucilius* Wonderful Learning, great Freedom, and abundance of Wit.

*Tully* calls *Lucilius*, The chief of the *Latin Satyrists*, a Learned Man, and a very Ingenious Person, of a Sharp Wit, one of an Excellent Life himself, and a Stinging Accuser of the Villanies of Others.

*Juvenal*, in his first *Satyr* observes, That *Lucilius* us'd to write with so much sharpness and freedom, that all the lewd, dissolute Persons of those Times, were afraid of him : Which *Dryden* has thus translated into *English Verse* :

But when *Lucilius* brandishes his Pen,  
And flashes in the face of Guilty Men,  
A cold Sweat stands in drops on ev'ry part ;  
And Rage succeeds to Tears, Revenge to Smart.

*Aulus*

*Aulus Gellius*, lib. 18. cap. v. *Noctium Atticarum*, says, That *Lucilius* was incomparably well skill'd in the *Latin* Tongue.

*Turnebus*, in the nineteenth Book of his *Adversaria*, cap. vi. remarks, That *Lucilius* in his *Satyr*s, did sometimes fall into the *Iambick*.

And in the 28th Book, cap. ix. *Turnebus* observes to us, That though *Lucilius's* Verses are not to be compar'd to those of other *Poets*; yet they have somewhat in them, which is both pleasant and entertaining.

*Lilius Gyraldus* tells us, There were some who blam'd *Lucilius*, for mixing *Greek* with his *Latin*, just as *Pytholeon Rhodius* did in his *Epigrams*, who, for that reason, was laugh'd at by *Horace*. But, says *Gyraldus*, I am sure *Catullus* (and I could name others) did the same thing.

*Gerardus Johannes Vossius*, lib. v. *Institutionum Oratoriarum*, pag. 315. says, That of all the *Latin* Poets, *Lucilius* was observ'd to have made the greatest use of the Figure *Tmesis*, according to that *Distich* of *Ansonius*:

*Rescisso disces componere nomine Versum:*

*Lucilii vatis sic imitator eris.*

*Anson.* Epist. 5.

*Dryden* remarks, That tho' *Horace* seems to have made *Lucilius* the first Author of *Satyr* in Verse, amongst the *Romans*; He is only thus to be understood, That *Lucilius* had given a more graceful turn to the *Satyr* of *Ennius* and *Pacuvius*; not that he invented a new *Satyr* of his own.—And, as *Dryden* observes, the *Roman* Language was grown more refin'd, and by consequence

sequence more capable of receiving the *Grecian Beauties* in *Lucilius's* Time; and therefore well might *He* write better than either *Ennius* or *Pacuvius*. *Dryd.* *Dedic.* before *Juvenal*, pag. 25, 26.

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## *Titus Lucretius Carus,*

**B**Oth a *Latin Poet*, and a *Philosopher*; He was born in the Second Year of the 171. *Olympiad*, 93 Years before *Christ*. According to *Eusebius*, he kill'd himself in the Forty Fourth Year of his Age, his *Misstress* having given him a *Love-Potion*, which made him run mad: Though *Others* tell us, he died in his Twenty Sixth Year, and believe his madness, proceeded from the Cares and Melancholy that oppress'd him after the Banishment of his beloved *Memmius*.

The only *Remains* this great Wit hath left us, are his Six Books, *De Rerum Natura*; being an exact *System* of the *Epicurean Philosophy*. *Eusebius* affirms, That *Lucretius* wrote these Books in his *Lucid Intervals*, when the Strength of Nature had thrown off all the disturbing Particles, and his Mind (as 'tis observ'd of Mad Men) was Sprightly and Vigorous: Then in a *Poetical Rapture* he could fly with his *Epicurus* beyond the flaming limits of this World, frame and dissolve Seas and Heavens in an instant, and by some unusual Sallys, be the strongest Argument of his own Opinion; for it seems impossible, says *Creech*, that some things which he delivers, should proceed from *Reason* and *Judgment*, or any Cause but Chance, and unthinking Fortune.

*Ovid*

*Ovid*, speaking of *Lucretius*, gives him a very high Character, prefaging that his Verses would continue as long as the World endur'd:

*Carmina Sublimis tunc sunt peritura Lucreti,  
Exitio Terras cum dabit una dies.*

*Ovid. Amor. lib. 1. Eleg. 15.*

Although *Cicero*, in his Second Book, *Epist. x.* to his Brother *Quintus*, Confirms his Brothers Opinion, That the Poem of *Lucretius* was not much set forth, or adorn'd with Wit; yet at the same time he owns, that *Lucretius* has therein shew'd a great deal of Art.

*Julius Scaliger*, in his Comment upon *Aristotle's Historia Animalium*, cap. 10. calls *Lucretius*, a Divine Person, and an Incomparable Poet.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in *Scaligerana* 1. pag. 104. says, That *Lucretius* is a good Book; that there is not a better Author in the Latin Tongue; and that *Virgil* has taken many things from him.

*Gaspar Scioppius*, in his *De Arte Criticâ*, pag. 93. declares, he is of *Lambinus's* Opinion, That never any Man spoke Latin to a greater Perfection; and that neither *Tully*, nor *Cæsar*, Wrote with a purer Style than *Lucretius*.

*Aulus Gellius*, lib. 1. cap. 21. Noct. Attic. styles *Lucretius*, a Poet that excell'd both in Wit and Eloquence.

*Vossius*, in his *De Arte Grammaticâ*, pag. 797. calls *Lucretius*, The best of all the Latin Authors.

*Monsieur Bayle*, in the *Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres*, Juillet 1685. pag. 812. says, There appears so much Eloquence in the Verse of *Lucretius*, that had he liv'd in the time of *Augustus*, he might very well have disputed the Point with *Virgil*. But, as he observes,

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Thirty or Forty Years makes a mighty difference between two Authors. And yet for all that, there are some *Criticks*, who have plac'd *Lucretius* above all other *Latin* Authors. But this, says *Bayle*, is too much; 'tis enough to put him in the List of good Authors.

*Evelyn*, in the *Preface* to his *Translation* of the First Book of *Lucretius*, observes to us, That in this Work of *Lucretius*, Nature her self sits Triumphant, wanting none of her just Equipage and Attendance; whilst our *Carus* hath erected this everlasting *Arch* to her Memory, so full of Ornament and exquisite Workmanship, as nothing of this kind hath ever either approach'd, or exceeded it.

Where the matter he takes in hand is capable of Form and Lustre, he makes it (says *Evelyn*) even to out-shine the Sun it self in splendor: And as he spares no cost to deck and set it forth; so never had Man a more Rich and Luxurious Fancy, more Keen and Sagacious Instruments to square the most stubborn and rude of *Materials*, into that spiring softness you will every where find them dispos'd, in this his Stupendious and well-built *Theatre of Nature*.

*Dryden* remarks, That if *Lucretius* was not of the best Age of *Roman Poetry*, he was at least of that which preceded it; and he himself refin'd it to that degree of perfection, both in the Language and the Thoughts, that he left an easie Task to *Virgil*; who as he succeeded him in time, so he Copy'd his Excellencies: For the Method of the *Georgicks* is plainly deriv'd from him. *Lucretius* had chosen a Subject naturally crabbed; he therefore adorn'd it with *Poetical* Descriptions, and Precepts of Morality, in the beginning and ending of his Books. Which you see *Virgil* has imitated with great success, in those Four Books, which (says *Dryden*) in my Opinion, are more perfect in their Kind, than even his Divine

*Æneids*. The turn of his Verse he has likewise follow'd, in those Places which *Lucretius* has most Labour'd, and some of his very Lines he has Transplanted into his own Works, without much variation. If I am not mistaken (says *Dryden*) the distinguishing Character of *Lucretius*, (I mean of his Soul and Genius) is a certain kind of noble Pride, and positive Assertion of his Opinions. He is every where confident of his own Reason, and assuming an absolute Command not only over his vulgar Reader, but even his Patron *Memmius*. For he is always bidding him attend, as if he had the Rod over him; and using a Magisterial Authority, while he instructs him. From his time to ours, says *Dryden*, I know none so like him, as our Poet and Philosopher of *Malmsbury*. This is that perpetual *Dictatorship* which is exercis'd by *Lucretius*; who though often in the wrong, yet seems to deal *bonâ fide* with his Reader, and tells him nothing, but what he thinks; in which plain sincerity, I believe he differs from our *Hobbs*, who (says *Dryden*) could not but be convinc'd, or at least doubt of some *Eternal Truths* which he has oppos'd. But for *Lucretius*, he seems to disdain all manner of Replies, and is so confident of his Cause, that he is before hand with his *Antagonists*; urging for them, what ever he imagin'd they could say; and leaving them, as he supposes, without an Objection for the future. All this too, with so much scorn and indignation, as if he were assur'd of the *Triumph*, before he enter'd into the *Lists*. From this Sublime and daring Genius of his, it must (says *Dryden*) of necessity come to pass, that his thoughts must be Masculine, full of Argumentation, and that sufficiently warm. From the same fiery Temper proceeds the Loſtineſs of his Expressions, and the perpetual Torrent of his Verse, where the Barrenness



rennels of his Subject does not too much constrain the quickness of his Fancy. For there is no doubt to be made, (*says Dryden*) but that he cou'd have been every where as *Poetical*, as he is in his *Descriptions*, and in the *Moral* part of his *Philosophy*, if he had not aim'd more to *Instruct* in his *System of Nature*, than to *Delight*. But he was bent upon making *Memmius* a *Materialist*, and teaching him to despise an *Invisible Power*: In short, says *Dryden*, he was so much an *Atheist*, that he forgot sometimes to be a *Poet*. *Dryd. Pref to the Sylvæ: Or, The Second Part of Poetical Miscellanies.*

*Dr. Thomas Burnet*, in the Second Book of his *Theory of the Earth*, chap. x. is of Opinion, That *Lucretius* was an *Epicuræan*, more from his Inclination, and the bent of his Spirit, than from Reason, or any Force of Argument. For though his Suppositions be very precarious, and his Reasonings all a long very slight, he will many times strut and triumph, as if he had wrested the *Thunder* out of *Jove's Right-Hand*; and a *Mathematician* (*says Burnet*) is not more confident of his *Demonstration*, than he seems to be of the Truth of his shallow *Philosophy*.

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## Marcus Valerius Martialis,

Born at *Bilbo* in *Spain*, in the Reign of *Claudius* the Emperor. When he was Twenty Years of Age he came to *Rome* under *Nero*, and there continued Thirty Five Years, in the good esteem of *Titus*, but

especially of *Domitian*, by whom he was advanced to the *Tribunate* and *Equestrian Dignity*: But upon *Domitian's* Death, he declin'd in his Interest; and therefore in *Trajan's* time, he return'd into his own Country; and there, after he had finish'd his Twelfth Book of *Epigrams*, in the Seventy Fifth Year of his Age he died, being reduc'd to very great poverty. The other Two Books, *viz.* the *Thirteenth* and *Fourteenth*, are called, *Xenia*, and *Apophoreta*, and by many thought to have been Writ by some other Hand.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in *Scaligerana* 1. says, the truest Character that can be given of *Martial's Epigrams*, is what *Martial* himself has given, *lib. 1. Epigr. 17.*

*Sunt bona, sunt quædam Mediocria, sunt mala plura.*

*Pliny* the Younger, in the 21. *Epistle* of his Third Book, tells *Priscus*, That *Martial* had a great deal of Wit and Smartness; and that there was diffus'd throughout his whole Work abundance of *Salt* and *Gaul*; but yet, that he sometimes shew'd great Candour.

*Adrianus Turnebus*, *lib. 13. cap. 19. Adversar.* says, *Martial* was a Pleasant, Witty Poet; that he can by no means be of their Opinion, who look upon him as an idle Buffoon; and that his *Epigrams*, let these men say what they please, are Writ with a great deal of Elegance.

*Julius Scaliger*, in his Third Book *De Poetica*, *cap. 126.* tells us, That the peculiar Properties of an *Epigram*, are *Brevity* and *Smartness*; this last quality, as *Scaliger* observes, *Catullus* did not always arrive at; but the most acute *Martial* never fail'd.

And in the Sixth Book, *pag 838.* *Scaliger* remarks, That many of *Martial's Epigrams* are Divine, and that the Style is both pure and exact, and very proper for  
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that great variety of Matter; that his Verses are easie and natural, and, in a Word, that they are very good. As for his other *Epigrams* that are obscene, (*says Scaliger*) I am so far from passing any Judgment on them, that indeed I have not so much as read them.

What think'st thou, *Janus Lernatius*? says *Lipsius*, was not *Scaliger*, who thought *Martial's* Verses smooth, easie and natural, and many of his *Epigrams* to be Divine, more in the right; than he who calls him an idle Buffoon? Which undecent Expression (*says Lipsius*) I am sorry so great a Man should apply so ill. 'Tis true indeed, *Martial* is nothing compar'd to *Catullus*, I know it well enough; but then this I know too, (*says Lipsius*) that though some of *Catullus's* *Epigrams* are not common and ordinary, yet all are not extraordinary. There are indeed many Lewd and Obscene things in *Martial*; and take my Word for't, (*says Lipsius*) in that little Book of *Catullus* there are every whit as immodest Expressions, but not so many. To conclude, (*says Lipsius*) he must be very ignorant, who knows not, that this was the fault of the Age. *Lips. lib. 1. Epistolicarum Questionum, Epist. v.*

*Erasmus*, in *Dialogo Ciceroniano*, pag. 147. remarks, That *Martial* had much of *Ovid's* Style, which was easie and natural; nay, that he had somewhat of the Air of *Cicero*: But he tells us, he does not mean in his *Epistles*, which he Writ before some of his Books; which, as *Erasmus* observes, God knows have little of *Cicero* in them.

*Morhofius*, in his *De Patavinitate Liviana*, pag. 160. tells us, That though *Martial* be charg'd by some ill-natur'd Criticks, for using sometimes the Spanish-Dialect; yet this ought not to deprive him of the just honour that's due to him, for his great Elegancy in the Latin Tongue.

But notwithstanding our Author has had such considerable Advocates, that appear'd for him; yet this has not

not frighten'd some from attacking him in the most opprobrious Manner: Thus,

*Muretus* says, That *Martial* compar'd to *Catallus*, is an idle sawcy Fellow, a meer *Droll*.

*Lilius Gyraldus* says, That his *Epigrams* never pleas'd any but a company of *Asses*.

And *Raphael Volaterranus* tells us, That *Martial's Epigrams* are not fit to be read; for that they contain neither *Elegancy*, nor *Morality*.

*Vossius*, *lib. 3. Institutionum Poeticarum*, pag. 107. observes to us, That *Martial* was one of those Authors, who at the same time he reprov'd Vice, taught it; and though he deserv'd high Commendation for the greatest part of his *Epigrams*; yet by those few that were *Obscene*, he had done infinitely more mischief, than by the *Others* he had done good.

*Rapin* remarks, That Men of a good Taste, preferr'd the way of *Catullus*, before that of *Martial*; there being more of true *delicacy* in *that*, than in *this*. And in these latter Ages, (*says Rapin*) we have seen a Noble *Venetian*, named *Andreas Naugerus*, who had an exquisite discernment, and who by a natural *antipathy* against all that which is call'd *Point*, or the *nipping Word* in the *Epigram*, which he judg'd to be of an ill relish, Sacrific'd every Year in Ceremony a Volume of *Martial's Epigrams* to the *Manes* of *Catullus*, in honour to his Character, which he judg'd was to be preferr'd to that of *Martial*.

## John Milton,

**W**AS one whose Natural Parts did deservedly give him a place amongst the Principal of our *English Poets*. He was Author (not to mention his other Works, both in *Latin* and *English*, by which his Fame is sufficiently known to all the Learned of *Europe*) of Two *Heroick* Poems, and a *Tragedy*; namely, *Paradise Lost*; *Paradise Regain'd*; and *Samson Agonistes*; in which he is generally thought to have very much reviv'd the Majesty, and true *Decorum* of *Heroick Poesse* and *Tragedy*.

*Dryden* tells us, That in *Epique Poetry*, the *English* have only to boast of *Spencer* and *Milton*; neither of whom wanted either *Genius* or *Learning*, to have been perfect Poets; and yet both of them are liable to many Censures.—As for *Milton*, says *Dryden*, whom we all admire with so much Justice, his *Subject* is not that of an *Heroick Poem*; properly so call'd: His Design is the losing of our Happiness; his Event is not prosperous, like that of all other *Epique Works*: His Heavenly Machines are many, and his Humané Persons are but two. But I will not (says *Dryden*) take Mr. *Rimer's* Work out of his Hands: He has promis'd the World a *Critique* on that Author; wherein, tho' he will not allow his Poem for *Heroick*, I hope he will grant us, that his Thoughts are elevated, his Words sounding, and that no Man has so happily Copy'd the Manner of *Homer*; or so Copiously translated his *Grecisms*, and the *Latin Elegancies* of *Virgil*. 'Tis true, says *Dryden*, he runs into a flat of Thought, sometimes for a Hundred Lines together,

together, but 'tis when he is got into a Track of Scripture: His Antiquated Words were his Choice, not his Necessity; for therein he imitated *Spencer*, as *Spencer* did *Chaucer*. And tho', perhaps, the love of their Masters, may have transported *both* too far, in the frequent use of them; yet in my Opinion, says *Dryden*, *Obsolete* words may then be laudably reviv'd, when either they are more *Sounding*, or more *Significant* than those in practice: And when their Obscurity is taken away, by joyning other Words to them which clear the Sense; according to the Rule of *Horace*, for the admission of New Words. But in both Cases, says *Dryden*, a Moderation is to be observ'd, in the use of them: For unnecessary *Coinage*, as well as unnecessary *Revival*, runs into Affectation; a fault to be avoided on either hand. Neither (says *Dryden*) will I justify *Milton*, for his *Blank Verse*, tho' I may excuse him, by the Example of *Hannibal Caro*, and other *Italians*, who have us'd it: For whatever Causes he alledges for the abolishing of *Rhyme*, his own particular Reason is plainly this, that *Rhyme* was not *his* Talent; he had neither the Ease of doing it, nor the Graces of it; which is manifest in his *Juvenilia*, or Verses written in his Youth: Where his *Rhyme* is always constrain'd and forc'd, and comes hardly from him at an Age when the Soul is most pliant; and the Passion of love, makes almost every Man a *Rhymer*, though not a Poet. *Dryd.* Dedic. before the *Translat.* of *Juvenal*, pag. 8, 9.

I consulted (says *Dryden*) a greater Genius than *Cowley*, (without offence to the *Manes* of that Noble Author) I mean *Milton*, for the *Beautiful Turns* of Words and Thoughts. But as he endeavours every where to express *Homer*, whose Age had not arriv'd to that  
*fineness,*

*fineness*, I found in him (says *Dryden*) a true Sublimity, lofty Thoughts, which were cloath'd with admirable *Grecisms*, and *Ancient Words*, which he had been digging from the Mines of *Chaucer*, and of *Spencer*, and which, with all their *Rusticity*, had somewhat of *Venerable* in them: But, says *Dryden*, I found not *there* what I look'd for, viz. any *Elegant Turns*, either on the *Word*, or on the *Thought*. *Dryd. Ibid. pag. 50.*

The *Authors* of the *Athenian Mercury*, in Answer to the 3<sup>d</sup> Question of *Vol. 5. Numb. 14. viz. Whether Milton and Waller were not the best English Poets? and which the better of the two?* do reply in these Words:

We shall answer this *double Question* together: They were *both* Excellent in their Kind, and exceeded each other, and all besides. *Milton* was the *fullest* and *loftiest*; *Waller* the *neatest* and most *correct* Poet we ever had. But yet we think *Milton* wrote too little in *Verse*, and too much in *Prose*, to carry the Name of *Best* from all Others; and Mr. *Waller*, tho' a full and noble Writer, yet comes not up in our Judgments to that——*Mens diviniior atque os—Magna Sonaturum*, as *Horace* calls it, which *Milton* has, and wherein we think he was never equall'd.—His Description of the *Pandæmonium*, his Batrels of the Angels, his Creation of the World, his Digression of *Light*, in his *Paradise Lost*, are all Inimitable Pieces; And even that *antique Style* which he uses, seems to become the Subject, like the strange Dresses wherein we represent the old *Heroes*. The Description of *Samson's* Death, the artificial and delicate preparation of the *Incidents* and *Narrations*, the *Turn* of the *whole*, and more than all, the terrible *Satyr* on *Woman*, in his Discourse with *Dalilah*, are undoubtedly of a piece with his other Writings; and to say nothing of his *Paradise Regain'd*, whereof he had only finish'd the most barren

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part, in his *Juvenile Poems*; Those on *Mirth* and *Melancholly*; an *Elegy* on his Friend that was drown'd; and especially a *Fragment* of the *Passion*, are incomparable: However, we think him not so *general* a Poet, as some we have formerly had, and others still surviving.

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## John Oldham,

THE Son of a Non-Conformist Minister, was born at *Shipton* in *Glocestershire*, on the 9th. of *August*, 1653. He was of *St. Edmund's Hall* in *Oxford*. He died of the small Pox, on the 9th. of *Decemb.* 1683.

*Winstanley* calls Mr. *John Oldham*, The Delight of the *Muses*, and Glory of these last Times; a Man utterly unknown to me, says the *same Author*, but by his Works; which none can read but with Wonder and Admiration; so pithy his Strains, so sententious his Expressions, so Elegant his Oratory. so swimming his Language, so smooth his Lines; in *Translating* out-doing the *Original*, and in Invention matchless.

*Dryden*, To the Memory of Mr. *Oldham*.

*Farewell, too little and too lately known,  
Whom I began to think and call my own;  
For sure our Souls were near ally'd; and thine  
Cast in the same Poetick Mould with Mine.*



One Common Note on either Lyre did strike,  
 And Knaves and Fools were both abhor'd alike:  
 To the same Goal did both our Studies drive,  
 The last set out, the soonest did arrive.  
 Thus Nisus fell upon the Slippery place,  
 While his young Friend perform'd and won the Race.  
 O early ripe! to thy abundant Store  
 What could advancing Age have added more?  
 It might (what Nature never gives the young)  
 Have taught the Numbers of thy Native Tongue.  
 But Satyr needs not those, and Wit will shine  
 Through the harsh Cadence of a rugged Line.  
 A noble Error, and but seldom made,  
 When Poets are by too much force betray'd.  
 Thy generous Fruits, tho' gather'd e're their prime,  
 Still shew'd a Quickness; and maturing time  
 But mellows what we write to the dull Sweets of Rime.  
 Once more, Hail and Farewell; Farewell thou young,  
 But ah too short, Marcellus of our Tongue;  
 Thy Brows with Ivy, and with Laurels bound;  
 But Fate and Gloomy Night encompass thee around.

Dryden.

Durfey in Memory of John Oldham:

Obscure and Cloudy did the day appear,  
 As Heaven design'd to blot it from the Year:  
 The Elements all seem'd to disagree,  
 At least, I'm sure, they were at strife in me:  
 Possess'd with Spleen, which Melancholy bred;  
 When Rumor told me, that my Friend was dead,  
 That Oldham, honour'd for his early Worth,  
 Was cropt, like a sweet Blossom, from the Earth,

Where late he grew, delighting every Eye  
 In his rare Garden of Philosophy.  
 The fatal sound new Sorrows did infuse,  
 And all my Grievs were doubled at the News:  
 For we with mutual Arms of Friendship strove,  
 Friendship the true and solid part of Love;  
 And he so many Graces had in store,  
 That Fame or Beauty could not bind me more.  
 His Wit in his Immortal Verse appears,  
 Many his Vertues were, tho' few his Tears;  
 Which were so spent, as if by Heaven contriv'd,  
 To lash the Vices of the longer liv'd.  
 None was more skilful, none more learn'd than he,  
 A Poet in its sacred Quality:  
 Inspir'd above, and could command each Passion,  
 Had all the Wit without the Affectation.  
 A calm of Nature still possess'd his Soul,  
 No canker'd Envy did his Breast controul:  
 Modest as Virgins that have never known  
 The jilting Breeding of the nauseous Town;  
 And easie as his Numbers that sublime  
 His lofty Strains, and beautifie his Rhime,  
 Till the Time's Ignomy inspir'd his Pen,  
 And rous'd the drowsie Satyr from his Den;  
 Then fluttering Fops were his Aversion still,  
 And felt the Power of his Satyrick Quill.  
 The Spark whose Noise proclaims his empty Pate,  
 That struts along the Mall with antick Gate;  
 And all the Phyllis and the Chloris Fools  
 Were damn'd by his Invektive Muse in Shoals.  
 Who on the Age look'd with impartial Eyes,  
 And aim'd not at the Person, but the Vice.  
 To all true Wit he was a constant Friend,  
 And as he well could Judge, could well Commend.

The

*The mighty Homer he with care perus'd,  
And that great Genius to the World infus'd ;  
Immortal Virgil, and Lucretius too,  
And all the Seeds o'th' Soul his Reason knew :  
Like Ovid, could the Ladies Hearts assail,  
With Horace sing, and lash with Juvenal.  
Unskill'd in nought that did with Learning dwell,  
But Pride to know he understood it well.  
Adieu thou modest Type of perfect Man ;  
Ah, had not thy Perfections that began  
In Life's bright Morning been eclips'd so soon,  
We all had bask'd and wanton'd in thy Noon ;  
But Fate grew envious of thy growing Fame,  
And knowing Heav'n, from whence thy Genius came,  
Assign'd thee by immutable Decree  
A glorious Crown of Immortality,  
Snatch'd thee from all thy Mourning Friends below,  
Just as the Bays were planting on thy Brow.  
Thus Worldly Merit has the Worlds Regard ;  
But Poets in the next have their Reward :  
And Heaven in Oldham's Fortune seem'd to show,  
No Recompence was good enough below :  
So to prevent the Worlds ingrateful Crimes,  
Enrich'd his Mind, and bid him die betimes.*

**T. Dursley.**

This most celebrated Poet died in the House of his Noble Patron, the Earl of Kingstone, at Holme Pierpont, in the year, 1683. and was buried in the Church there. Soon after was a Monument put over his Grave, with this *Inscription* thereon.

*M. S. Joh. Oldham Poetæ, quò nemo sacro furore plenior, nemo rebus Sublimior, aut Verbis felicius audax ; cuius famam omni ævo propria satis consecrabunt Carmina.*

*Quem*

*Quem inter primos Honoratissimi Gulielmi Comitis de Kingstone Patroni Sui Amplexus Variolis correptum, heu nimis immatura Mors rapuit, & in Cœlestem transtulit Chorum. Natus apud Shipton in Agro Glocestrensi, in Aula Sti. Edmundi Graduat. Obijt die Decembris nono, Anno Döm. 1683. Ætatis 30.*

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## Oppian,

**A** *Cicilian*, a famous Poet, who liv'd in the time of the Emperours, *Severus* and *Caracalla*; He wrote a Poem of *Fishing*, call'd *Halicutica*; and another of *Hunting*, call'd *Cynegetica*; and a third of *Fowling*.

He dedicated his two Poems of *Fishing* and *Hunting*, both yet extant, to the Emperour *Caracalla*, of whom he receiv'd for every Verse a Piece of Gold; which was the occasion of their being call'd *Golden Verses*.

He dy'd of the *Plague* about the latter end of *Caracalla's* Reign, in the Thirtieth Year of his Age.

*Julius Scaliger*, had a most particular esteem for *this Author*; he tells us, in his *Poetica*, pag. 664, and 758. That *Oppian* is a most Excellent Poet; that he is agreeable and easie; his Style natural, and yet sublime, eloquent and harmonious. So that, he has not only surpass'd *Gratius* and *Nemesianus*, who have writ of the same Subject; but he seems to have the very Air of *Virgil*, whom he endeavour'd particularly to imitate; and indeed, says *Scaliger*, I always thought, he gave us the true, lively Image of that *Divine Poet*.

*Borrichius,*

*Borrichius*, in his *De Poetis*, pag. 16. observes, That the *Style* of *Oppian* is Copious and Beautiful, abounding with Excellent Sentences, sometimes a little obscure, but always Learned; And that his *Prefaces* are so very elaborate, and of that *Asiatick* form, that they may well enough pass for so many *Harangues*, and *Panegyrick Orations*.

*Le Sieur Crasso*, in his account of the *Greek Poets*, Writ in *Italian*, says, That the particular excellency of *Oppian* lies in his *Thoughts*. and *Comparisons*; and, that he had done one very difficult thing, which was, his observing an Uniformity in all parts, and yet that he could both preserve the Elegancy of his *Style*, and at the same time so thoroughly prosecute the Subject he had in hand.

*Tanaquillus Faber*, in his First Book of *Epistles*, *Epist.* 63. speaking of *Oppian*, calls him, That admirable, and never to be enough commended *Poet*.

*Isaac Casaubon*, in an *Epistle* to *Cunradus Rittershufius*, Dated in *September*, 1597. says, Never any Man Lov'd *Oppian* better than he did.

*Cunradus Rittershufius*, in his *Preface* before *Oppian's* Works, tells us, That *Oppian* was a very good Man, and an Excellent *Poet*; agreeable to all, offensive to none; that his Death was much lamented by all good Men, whether they were his Fellow-Citizens, (who both built him a Monument, and erected his Statue) or such Foreigners as had ever heard of his Fame.

He likewise adds, that *Oppian's* Poems were very choice and extraordinary, and came behind none of the *Greek Poets*; nay, that they were to be preferr'd before the greatest part of them; so that in his Opinion, every Verse was Richly worth a Piece of Gold.

Nor

Nor am I (*says Rittersbusius*) singular herein; for I dare be hold to say, that all the Men of Learning and Prudence are of the same Judgment.

Dr. Brown, in his First Book, and Eighth Chapter of *Vulgar Errors*, remarks, That *Oppian* in his *Poems of Hunting and Fishing*, hath but sparingly inserted the Vulgar Conceptions thereof. So that abating the annual Mutation of Sexes in the *Hiæna*, the single Sex of the *Rhinoceros*, the *Antipathy* between two *Drums* of a *Lamb* and a *Wolfe's Skin*, the *informity of Cubs*, the *Venation of Centaures*, the *Copulation of the Muræna* and the *Viper*, with some few others, *Oppian* may (*says Brown*) be Read with great delight and profit. It is not without some Wonder his *Elegant Lines* are so neglected; for surely hereby (*says Brown*) we reject one of the best *Epick Poets*.

*Rapin*, in his *Reflexions* upon *Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie*, part 2. sect. xv. says, that *Oppian* is dry.

*Claudius Verderius*, in his *Censure of Ancient Authors*, observes to us, That *Oppian* did commonly mistake one Fish for another.

*Arnoldus de Boot*, lib 3. cap. 11. *Animadvers. Sacr. in Vetus Testamentum*, remarks, That *Oppian* in his Description of a *Well-bred Horse*, has taken several Things out of the Thirty Ninth Chapter of *Job*.

*Publius*

## Publius Ovidius Naso,

**A** Famous Poet, born at *Sulmo*, which is Nineteen Miles distant from *Rome*, in the Second Year of the 184. *Olympiad*, One and Forty Years before *Christ*. He was once in great Favour with *Augustus*; but either for some freedom us'd with his Daughter *Julia*, or for his Lascivious Verses, he Banish'd him to *Pontus*, at Fifty Years of Age; where, after Eight Years and some Months, he died.

Many of his Writings are extant, but to our great grief some are quite lost, as his *Halientica*, his *Medea*, and the Six last Books of his *Fasti*.

*Borrichius*, in his *De Poetis*, pag. 51. tells us, That *Ovid* had spent his Youth in the Study of the *Law*, but afterwards finding his *Genius* more inclin'd to *Amours* and *Poetry*, he went to *Rome*, and there, by reason of the sweetness of his Temper, the nobleness of his Extraction, and the beauty of his Poetry, he soon grew into Fame and Reputation. And indeed, says *Borrichius*, never was there a Poet more easie and more natural, or of greater quickness and readiness than *Ovid*.

*Erasmus*, in his *Dialogus Ciceronianus*, pag. 147. calls *Ovid*, The *Cicero* among the Poets.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in *Scaligerana* 2. is of the opinion, That no Man ever did, or can imitate, that easiness of Style which was in *Ovid*.

But *Vossius*, in his *De Poetis Latinis*, pag. 30. tells us, That though indeed generally *Ovid* is very easie and Natural in his Style, yet sometimes, by his *Transposing* of Words, he seems to be quite otherwise.

As when at the very beginning of his *De Arte Amandi*, he says,

*Siquis in hoc artem populo non novit Amandi.*

Whereas ( says *Fossius* ) it might better have been express'd thus:

*Siquis in hoc populo legem non novit Amandi.*

*Daniel Heinsius*, in his *De Tragædiæ Constitutione*, cap. 13. says, That *Ovid* Transcends all other Authors either in making things that are false seem probable; or things that are obscure, perspicuous; and in curiously adorning both the one and the other; or else in relating things plainly, and nakedly, as they are.

He further observes, That *Ovid* is every where full of *Moral Instructions*; even when he is frolicsome and wanton: That no body knew better how to express himself, nor how to level his Thoughts to the meanest Capacity with more advantage.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in *Prolegomenis Manilianis*, remarks, That it was a false, and an undeserved Character that some had affix'd to *Ovid*, viz. That he never knew when to give over.

*Obertus Gifanius*, in his *Apolog. pro Poet. Lat.* pag. 484. tells us, That *Ovid* was so exquisitely skill'd in the *Latin* Tongue, that, according to the opinion of all Learned Men, if the *Roman* Language were utterly lost, and nothing left but the Works of *Ovid*, they alone would be sufficient to retrieve it again.

*Quintilian*, lib. x. cap. 1. informs us, That *Ovid* in his *Heroicks* is frolicsome and wanton, and that he has too good an



an Opinion of himself; but yet in some respects, he deserves to be commended.

Seneca, in the Third Book of his *Natural Questions*, cap. 27. calls *Ovid* the most Ingenious of all the Poets: but, as he observes, 'twas a thousand pities, he spent his excellent Talent upon such Childish, trifling Subjects, as some of *his* were.

*Dryden*, in his *Pref. to the Sylvæ, or the Second Part of Poetical Miscellanies*, remarks, That *Ovid* with all his sweetness, has but little variety of Numbers and Sound; that he is always as it were upon the *Hand-Gallop*, and his Verse runs upon *Carpet-Ground*. He avoids all *Synæphæ's*, or cutting off one *Vowel* when it comes before another, in the following Word: So that minding only Smoothness, he wants both Variety and Majesty.

*Dryden* for all this, in his *Dedication before Examen Poeticum, or the Third Part of Miscellany Poems*, tells us, That *Ovid* is certainly more palatable to the Reader, than any of the *Roman Wits*, though some of them are more Lofty, some more instructive, and others more Correct. He had Learning enough, says *Dryden*, to make him equal to the Best. But as his Verse came easily, he wanted the toyl of Application to amend it. He is often Luxuriant, both in his Fancy and Expressions; and not always Natural. If Wit be Pleasantry, says *Dryden*, he has it to excess: But if it be Propriety, *Lucretius*, *Horace*, and above all *Virgil*, are his Superiours.

*Tanaquillus Faber*, in his First Book of *Epistles*, Epist. 37. says, That *Ovid* is full of Wit in every part of him, which no Man, who wanted not Wit himself, did ever deny; and that all Men do likewise agree, his Learning is every where Conspicuous: But I know not, says *Faber*, whether *Ovid* did any where shew more Wit and Learning, than in his Second Book *De Tristibus*. Nor is

this (says my Author) much to be Wonder'd at; since he was to plead his own cause before *Augustus*, a Prince of Learning, and who was also a Poet.

And in the same Book, *Epist.* 71. He tells us, he does not know in all the *Latin Tongue*, any thing of greater Wit and Elegancy, ever Writ by any Poet, than *Ovid's Eighth Elegy* of the Second Book *Ponticorum*; every thing in it so neat, so fine, so full of variety, so Pathetick, and so very Elegant.

What a high opinion *Ovid* had of the *Elegies* of his own Composing, plainly appears by those two arrogant Verses of his, in the *Remedia Amoris*, vers. 395, 396.

*Tantum se nobis Elegi debere fatentur;  
Quantum Virgilio nobile debet Epos.*

He thought the World was as much beholden to him for the *Elegy*, as ever it was to *Virgil* for the *Epick*. But had this come from some other hand, it would certainly have carried greater Modesty, if not Authority.

*Rapin*, in his *Reflex. on Aristotle of Poësie*, part 2. sect. 29. says, That they who have Writ *Elegy* best amongst the *Latins*, are *Tibullus*, *Propertius*, and *Ovid*. *Tibullus* is elegant and polite; *Propertius* noble and high; but *Ovid* is to be preferr'd to both; because he is more Natural, more moving, and more passionate; and thereby he has better expressed the Character of *Elegy* than the others.

But notwithstanding this, the same Author tells us, in his *Comparing of Homer and Virgil*, cap. xi. That many of those *Examples* and *Comparisons*, which *Ovid* makes use of in his *De Tristibus*, and his other *Elegies*, are meerly Superfluous, and do plainly shew,  
that

that *Ovid* was not arriv'd to a full Maturity of Judgment.

*Julius Scaliger*, In the Sixth Book of his *Poetica*, pag. 855. remarks, That *Ovid's De Tristibus* and *De Ponto* (both which Titles he finds fault with) are less elaborate than his other Pieces, and especially than his *Epistles*.

*Abraham Cowley*, in his *Preface*, observes, that one may see through the Style of *Ovid De Tristibus*, the humbled and dejected condition of *Spirit* with which he Wrote it; there scarce remain any footsteps of that *Genius*, *Quem nec Jovis ira, nec ignes*, &c. The Cold of the Country (says *Cowley*) had stricken through all his Faculties, and benumb'd the very Feet of his Verses. He is himself, methinks, like one of the Stories of his own *Metamorphosis*; and though there remain some weak Resemblances of *Ovid* at Rome, it is but as he says of *Niobe*,

*In vultu color est sine Sanguine, Lumina mæstis  
Stant immota genis; nihil est in Imagine vivum  
Flet tamen*————

*Ovid*. *Metamorph. Lib. 6.*

How highly *Ovid* esteem'd, and valued the Fifteen Books of his *Metamorphosis*, he himself gives us to understand, by those Two Verses, towards the End of the said Work:

*Jamque Opus exegi: quod nec Jovis ira, nec ignes,  
Nec poterit ferrum, nec edax abolere vetustas.*

*Petrus Crinitus*, in his *De Poet. Lat.* says, That *Ovid*, in his *Metamorphosis*, copied after one *Parthenius* of *Chios*, a Poet, who had writ in *Greek* an excellent Poem upon

upon the same Subject.—*He* further says, This Work of *Ovid's* was so highly esteem'd of by the *Grecian* Wits, that they translated it into their own Language; and that it was full of great Variety of Learning; although the Author, as he himself attests, had not put his finishing hand to it. And *Crinitus* assures us, it was publish'd by some of his Friends, in his absence, and without his Knowledge.

*Vossius* also, in his *De Imitatione Poeticâ*, cap. 6. pag. 26. informs us, That *Ovid* himself did not think his *Metamorphosis* correct enough; which was the ground of his Complaint in the first and third Book *De Tristibus*. And therefore, when he was to be banish'd, he had fully resolv'd to have burnt it; as he had done by some others of his Books, according to his own Relation in the *Tenth Elegy* of the fourth Book, *De Tristibus*. But it was then too late; for his Friends had by that time got Copies of it.

*Rapin* observes to us, in his *Reflex.* on *Aristotle's* Treatise of *Poesie*, part 2. sect. xv. That *Ovid* has Wit, Art, and Design in his *Metamorphosis*; but withal he has *Youthfulness* that could hardly be pardon'd, but for the Vivacity of his Wit, and a certain Happiness of Fancy.

*He* also tells us, in his Comparison of *Homer* and *Virgil*, chap. x. That *Ovid* both in his *Metamorphosis*, and his *Epistolæ Heroidum*, as also *Velleius Paterculus*, were the first Authors who brought into fashion the use of extraordinary and surprizing *Epithets*; whereas that Age had (before) in a particular manner affected a plainness of Speech, and an unaffected sort of Dialect. But, says *Rapin*, These Authors had Judgment enough how to put off these false Diamonds.

*Borrichius*, in his *De Poetis*, pag. 51. remarks, That *Ovid's* Style in his *Metamorphosis*, is not so lofty as in some other Pieces of his; but at the same time he owns, there is beauty and exactness enough in it. He further observes, that the fifteen Books of the *Metamorphosis*, are in this respect highly to be admir'd, inasmuch as they do, in that wonderful Order, and as it were with a certain Chain and concatenation, present to us almost all the *Fables* of the *Ancients*, from the beginning of the World, to that very time.

And to the same effect, *Vossius*, lib. 3. *Institut. Poetic.* pag. 19, 20. tells us, That *Ovid* had shew'd such prodigious Art and Skill in the close Connexion of these *Fables*, that he is (indeed) worthy of the highest admiration.

And we find, the very same thing is affirm'd by *Guilielmus Canterus*, lib. 1. *Novarum Lektionum*, cap. xx. where he informs us, that he was so Charm'd with the Excellent Order, that *Ovid* had observ'd in the *Linking* and *Chaining* these *Fables* one to the Other; that he could not forbear reducing the whole Work into an *Epitome*; that so, as in a Picture, he might with one view see, and admire, the several parts of this most Incomparable Poem.

*Petrus Crinitus* says, That *Ovid* compos'd Six Books of his *Fasti*, which he sent to *Germanicus* the Son of *Drusus*, the other Six, by reason of his sudden Death, or, as many think, his unhappy Banishment, he could not go through with.

This, says *Crinitus*, is a very Learned Piece, and contains abundance of Choice Learning.

*Julius Scaliger*, lib. 6. *Poetices*, pag. 855. takes notice, That the Style of *Ovid* in his *Fasti*, is easie, soft, and natural; and that it is a Work which abounds with a  
great

great deal of Ancient Learning; and although the Subject is not always equally tractable, nor capable of being adorn'd; nor has he often Scope enough for his Wit; yet (says *Scaliger*) in many places of this *Poem*, he goes beyond himself in politeness and purity of Style.

Mr. *John Selden* was of the Opinion, that *Ovid* was not only a fine *Poet*, but (as a Man may say) a great *Canon-Lawyer*, as appears in his *Fasti*, where we have more of the *Festivals* of the *Old Romans*, than any where else: 'Tis pity, says *Selden*, the rest are lost. **Selden's** Table-Talk, pag. 41.

*Rapin*, in his Comparison of *Homer* and *Virgil*, chap. xi. prefers the *Fasti* of *Ovid* before any of his other Works.

Here, says *Rapin*, we find both the Prudence and the Temper of his Elder Years; whereas every where else he shews himself a young Man.

*Le Sieur Rosteau*, in his *Censure of Books and Authors*, conceives, that *Ovid's Epistles* are beyond any Man's power to imitate; And that they do far exceed either his *Metamorphosis*, or his *Fasti*.

*Crinitus* tells us, That *Ovid* in his *Epistles*, us'd very great Elegancy; and that they were compos'd with wonderful Art and Skill.

*Scaliger*, lib. 6. *Poetices*, pag. 855. says, The *Epistles* are the most polite of all the Works of *Ovid*; that the Thoughts are admirable, his Elegancy natural and easie; and, in a Word, that they have a true *Poetical* Air.

*Rapin*, in his Comparison of *Homer* and *Virgil*, chap. xi. mentioning *Ovid's Epistolæ Heroidum*, he calls them, *The Flower of the Roman Wit*. Which yet he owns, fall

fall very much short, of that maturity of Judgment which is the chief Perfection of *Virgil*.

The *Writers* of the *August History* report, That the Emperour *Ælius Verus*, was so much in love with that little Piece of *Ovid*, *De Arte Amandi*, that he would often read him in his Bed; and when he went to sleep, he would use to put him under his Pillow.

*Henricus Cornelius Agrippa*, in his *De Vanitate Scientiarum*, cap. 63. observes, That there have been many both Greek and Latin Poets, who have discover'd their Wanton Amours, as *Callimachus*, *Philetes*, *Anacreon*, *Orphæus*, *Alceon*, *Pindar*, *Sappho*, *Tibullus*, *Catullus*, *Propertius*, *Virgil*, *Juvenal*, *Martial*, *Cornelius Gallus*, and many others, more like *Pandars* than Poets; though all of them were out-done by *Ovid* in his *Heroick Epistles*, dedicated to *Corinna*, which were also out-done by himself in his *De Arte Amandi*; which, says *Agrippa*, he might better have Entitled, *The Art of Whoring and Pimping*: The Learning whereof, because it had Corrupted Youth with unchast Documents, therefore (says *Agrippa*) was the Author deservedly banish'd by the Emperour *Octavianus Augustus*, to the farthest parts of the North.

It were to be wish'd, says *Vossius*, lib. II. *Institutionum Poeticarum*, pag. 73. That *Ovid's Medea* were Extant. For so great was the Wit of that Man, that scarce any thing Humane, is comparable to him; if he has any fault, it is, that, as great Rivers do, he sometimes overflows. Which admit it be a fault, he sufficiently makes amends for it, by his many Excellent Qualities.

## Aulus Persius Flaccus,

**W**AS born at *Volaterræ*, a City in *Etruria*, now call'd *Tuscany*, in *Italy*. He died in the 29th. Year of his Age, and in the 62 Year of *Christ*.

He wrote Six *Satyrs*, on which (as He himself tells us) he bestow'd a great deal of labour and pains. And yet, says *Crinitus*, there are not those wanting, who do affirm, that this Work is imperfect, and was never finish'd by *Persius*. When these *Satyrs* were first Publish'd, *Crinitus* says, it is not to be imagin'd how highly they were esteem'd among the Learned. He Copied after the Poet *Lucilius*, who was very sharp in his *Invectives* against the Vices of the *Romans*.

*Quintilian*, lib. 10. cap. 1. says, That *Persius* deserv'd a great deal of true Glory, even by this one Book.

*Martial* tells us, That *Persius* got more Credit by this one little Book, than others did by their many large Volumes:

*Sæpius in libro memoratur Persius uno,  
Quàm levis in totâ Marsus Amazonide.*

**Martial.** lib. 4. *Epigr.* 28.

*Lilius Gyraldus* remarks, That tho' the *Satyrs* of *Persius* are very obscure, and for the most part full of Things that are abstruse; yet for all that, he ought to be number'd among the Good Authors.

Persius



*Persius obscure, but full of Sense and Wit,  
Affected Brevity in all he Writ.*

**Boileau's** Art of Poetry.

*Vossius lib. 6. Institutionum Oratoriarum, pag. 454, says,* That *Persius* the Satyrift, ought to be pardon'd for his often using such bold and high-flown *Metaphors*. Since not only the *Soul*, but likewise the *Expression* of that *Noble Youth*, aim'd at nothing but what was Great and Lofty.

*Cardinal Bona*, in his *Notitia Auctorum*, tells us, That *Persius* was an acute Satyrift, but obscure; affecting a high topping Style; and that his frequent and extravagant *Metaphors*, did often cause him to be so Obscure. Though, as *Bona* observes, the Obscurity of *Persius*, did oftentimes proceed from our being ignorant of several of those Customes, which he alludes to, and which in his time even the *Meanest* of the *People* understood; which since we are now ignorant of, we do therefore (forsooth) conclude them to be *Mysteries*.

The truth on't is, says *Francis Vauvassor*, the *Jesuite*, in his *De Ludicrà Dictione, pag. 239, &c.* I cannot but Wonder, what great and mighty Matters *Quintilian* and *Martial* found in the Six Satyrs of *Persius*, which we so long after have not been able to find out, nay, not so much as to guess at. And yet certainly, there is nothing in him, but what may well appear Greater to us in these days, than ever possibly they cou'd to the *Ancients*; because they were acquainted with many of the Customs that were in his time; and therefore they esteem'd them (as well they might) to be Things not at all extraordinary; whereas, the very same Things, by a distance of many Ages, seem to us as mighty *Mysteries*: So that we are

apt to call those Things by the name of *Deep and Profound Learning*, which in *those times* the *Servants and Trades-Men*, nay even the very *Mob* themselves, perfectly understood. Hence therefore *Vavassor* Concludes, There is nothing in *Perfius*, that deserves our highest commendation, much less our Admiration. For, *says he*, to speak the truth, that which to me seems most remarkable in *this Author*, is his *Obscurity*; which, in all probability, was the first ground of his being reputed so *Profoundly Learned*. His *Verses*, *says Vavassor*, seem just like the *Oracles* of *Old*, which stand in need of some body to *Interpret* them: Now, if *Perfius* became thus *Obscure*, before he was aware; it was certainly a great fault; but if he did it for the nonce, there is no reason why so many should admire his Writings, which they understand not; Or, why they should commend a Writer, who had no mind to be understood.— For my part, *says Vavassor*, I give to *Perfius* the deference that is due to him: I allow him his *jest*s, his *dry* *bobbs*, his *Wit*, and his *Sarcasms*: nor will I take from him his *Latin*, which as it is not the very best, so I must own, it is none of the Worst.

*Julius Scaliger*, *lib. 6. Poetices*, pag. 838. remarks, That *Perfius* had a crabbed, unpleasant sort of Style; And, in plain terms, he calls him, a silly, Trifling Author, a perfect *Bragadochio*, and one who valued himself much upon the account of his Learning, which was hot and feaverish; and, in conclusion, *Scaliger* thought him by no means fit to come into Competition with *Juvenal* or *Horace*.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in *Scaligerana* 1. and 2. calls *Perfius*, a sorry Poet, and a most wretched Author; who minded nothing so much as to render himself *Obscure*; for which reason he was call'd, *The blind Poet*. And yet for all this Character, *Scaliger* owns, they might by  
way

way of *Comment* write excellent Things upon him. As *Vavassor* observes *Casaubon* did, whose *Comment* upon *Persius*, as he tells us, was much more to be valu'd, than the Text it self.

*Rapin*, in the Second part of his *Reflex.* on *Aristotle* of *Poesie*, sect. 28. observes, That *Persius*, who to the gravity and vehemence of *Juvenal* had joyn'd *Obscurity* (caus'd by the affectation he had to appear *Learned*) has no better success, in making an Impression; because he yields no delight: Not but that he has (says *Rapin*) some touches of an *hidden delicacy*; but these Strokes are always wrap'd up in so much profound Learning, that there needs a *Comment* to unfold them; He speaks not but with *Sadness*, what by *Horace* is said with the greatest *Mirth* imaginable, whom sometimes he wou'd imitate. His moroseness, says *Rapin*, scarce ever leaves him; he speaks not of the least Things but in a *heat*; and he never *Sports*, but after the most *serious* manner in the World.

*Vossius*, lib. III. *Institut. Poetic.* pag. 41. will have it, That *Persius* either did not understand the Rules of *Satyr*, or at least that he ne're minded, or observ'd them; because he only attack'd some few *Particular Persons*, instead of reproving *Vice* in *General*: And when he had a mind to take notice of, or touch upon the Faults, or Actions of such *Particular Persons*, he commonly makes use of some general Name; such as *Titius*, or *Nævius*; which does not give us light enough to know, either the *Fact*, or the *Person*. And therefore, says *Vossius*, this Poem of *Persius* does scarce deserve the Name of a *Satyre*; because he reflects upon no body by Name.

Dryden remarks, That as for the *Verse* of *Perfius*, neither *Casaubon* himself, nor any for him, can defend either his *Numbers*, or the *Purity* of his *Latin*. *Casaubon* gives this point for lost; and pretends not to justify either the *Measures*, or the *Words* of *Perfius*: He is evidently beneath *Horace* and *Juvenal*, in both.

Then, as his *Verse* is scabrous and hobbling, and his *Words* not every where well chosen, the *purity* of *Latin* being more corrupted, than in the time of *Juvenal*, and consequently of *Horace*, who writ when the *Language* was in the height of its perfection; so his *Diction* is hard; his *Figures* are generally too bold and daring; and his *Tropes*, particularly his *Metaphors*, insufferably strain'd.

In the third place, notwithstanding all the diligence of *Casaubon*, *Stelluti*, and a *Scotch Gentleman* (whom, says *Dryden*, I have heard extreamly commended for his *Illustrations* of him :) yet he is still *obscure*: Whether he affected not to be understood, but with difficulty; Or, whether the fear of his safety under *Nero*, compell'd him to this *Darkness* in some places; Or, that it was occasion'd by his close way of *Thinking*, and the brevity of his *Style*, and crowding of his *Figures*; Or, lastly, whether after so long a time, many of his *Words* have been corrupted; and many *Customs*, and *Stories* relating to them, lost to us; whether some of these *Reasons*, or all, concurr'd to render him so *Cloudy*; we may be bold to affirm, (says *Dryden*) that the best of *Commentators* can but guess at his meaning, in many passages: And none can be certain that he has divin'd rightly.

After all, (says *Dryden*) *Perfius* was a *Young Man*, like his *Friend* and *Contemporary* *Lucan*: Both of them *Men* of extraordinary *Parts*, and great *acquir'd Knowledge*,

ledge, considering their Youth. But neither of them had arriv'd to that Maturity of Judgment, which is necessary to the Accomplishing of a Form'd Poet. And this consideration, as on the one hand it lays some Imperfections to their charge, so on the other side 'tis a candid excuse for those Failings, which are incident to Youth and inexperience; and we have more reason to wonder, how they, who dy'd before the Thirtieth Year of their Age, could Write so well, and think so strongly; than to accuse them of those Faults, from which *Humane Nature*, and more especially in *Youth*, can never possibly be exempted.

But (says *Dryden*) to consider *Perfius* yet more closely: He rather insulted over *Vice* and *Folly*, than exposed them, like *Juvenal* and *Horace*. And as *Chast*, and Modest as *Perfius* is esteem'd, it cannot be deny'd, but that in some places he is broad and fulsome, as the latter Verses of the Fourth *Satire*, and of the Sixth, sufficiently Witness. And 'tis to be believ'd, that he who Commits the same Crime often, and without Necessity, cannot but do it with some kind of Pleasure.

But to come to a Conclusion, says *Dryden*, *Perfius* is manifestly below *Horace*; because he borrows most of his greatest Beauties from him: And *Casaubon* is so far from denying this; that he has written a Treatise purposely concerning it; wherein he shews a multitude of his Translations from *Horace*, and his Imitations of him, for the Credit of his Author; which he calls *Imitatio Horatiana*. *Dryd.* Dedic. before the *Translat.* of *Juvenal*, pag. xxx.

*Dryden* tells us, That the *Philosophy* in which *Perfius* was educated, and which he professes through his whole Book, is the *Stoick*. And herein it is, says *Dryden*, that *Perfius* has excell'd both *Juvenal* and *Horace*. He sticks

to his own *Philosophy*: He shifts not sides, like *Horace*, who is sometimes an *Epicuræan*, sometimes a *Stoick*, sometimes an *Eclectick*; as his present Humour leads him: Nor declaims like *Juvenal* against Vices, more like an *Orator*, than a *Philosopher*. *Perfius* is every where the same: True to the *Dogma's* of his Master: what he has learnt, he teaches Vehemently; and what he teaches, that he Practices himself. There is (says *Dryden*) a Spirit of Sincerity in all he says: You may easily discern that he is in Earnest, and is perswaded of that truth which he inculcates. In this, says *Dryden*, I am of Opinion, that he excels *Horace*, who is commonly in jeast, and laughs while he instructs: And is equal to *Juvenal*, who was as honest and serious as *Perfius*, and more he could not be. *Dryd. ibid. pag. xxxiii.*

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## *Franciscus Petrarcha,*

**A** Florentine Poet, Renowned both for *Latin* and *Italian* Poësie. He was born at *Arezzo*, a City of *Tuscany*, on the xxth. day of *July*, 1304. He was *Arch-Deacon* of *Parma*; and afterwards *Canon* of the *Cathedral Church* at *Padua*. He died suddenly of an *Apoplexy*, on the sixth. of *July* 1374.

He wrote many things in *Verse* as well as in *Prose*.

*Philippus Labbeus*, in his *De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis*, says, that *Petrarcha* was the most Considerable Man in that Age, for Wit, Eloquence, and Politeness in the *Latin* and *Italian* Languages, as also for skill in the *Italian*

*talian* and *Latin* Poësie ; and that *He* was the First, who rais'd Learning out of that *Gothick* darkness, after it had lain buried for many Ages.

*Laurentius Pignorius*, in his *Symbolæ Epistolice*, Epist. III. calls *Petrarch* a Man of very great Learning, and, considering the time he liv'd in, of a most Elegant Style.

*Sixtus Senensis*, in the fourth Book of his *Bibliotheca Sancta*, tells us, That *Petrarch* was Universally Learned ; that he was the first Restorer of the *Latin Tongue*, which had been quite extinct for several Centuries ; that *He* was the First, and beyond all dispute the Best, who wrote *Italian* Poetry ; And that amongst the *Latin* Poets he had so good a Character, that in the *Capitol* at *Rome*, by an Universal Approbation, he was chose Poet Laureat.

*Lilius Gyraldus* remarks, That tho' *Petrarch* and *Boccace* (who were of the same Form for Poetry) did not shew much of Judgment and Accuracy in their Poems ; which indeed is chiefly to be ascrib'd to the unhappiness of the Age they liv'd in ; yet, says *Gyraldus*, they both seem to have very much of a Poetical Genius.

*John Boccace*, in the Preface to his *Genealogia Deorum*, says, That if any Man living be fit to undertake so great a Work, it is that most excellent Person, *Francis Petrarch* : A Man of a Divine Wit and a never-failing Memory, as also of admirable Eloquence ; who is most intimately acquainted with the Histories of all Nations ; and is incomparably well skill'd in explaining the Fables of the Ancients ; And, in a word, exactly knowing in all the several Parts of Philosophy.

*Jacobus Philippus Tomasius*, in his Account of *Petrarch*, calls him, the Darling of the Muses, an Honour to the Ancients, the Delight of Learning, and one  
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who

who deserves a perpetual Memory.—This our Poet, says *Tomasinus*, had acquir'd so great a fame and reputation by his Works, that vast Numbers of Learned Men flock'd to him, just as *Bees* do to *Flowers*, to suck the *Hony*. And, indeed, what could be sweeter, or finer than the discourse of this *our Author*, who was so well skill'd in *Latin* and *Greek*, though more elegant in the *Italian*. *Petrarch*, says *Tomasin*, has two ways of attracting and moving his Reader, either by inculcating the Vertues, or else by Rhetorick and softness of Expression. In *Prose*, his Stile is Masculine and Nervous; and in *Verses*, says *Tomasin*, he is full, pure, elaborate, and yet suited to every Man's *Genius*. To conclude, he has in all parts wonderful Pleasantness, and great Variety; his Sentences are beautiful, and his Words manly. **Tomasin**, in *Petrarcha redivivo*, Cap. 1. and Cap. 8.

*Paulus Vergerius*, who writ the Life of *Francis Petrarch*, says, He was a Man of great Knowledge and Learning; and that there was scarce any sort of Learning, fit for a Gentleman, wherein he had not made some considerable Progress.—Of all the Works that *Petrarch* had wrote, *Vergerius* puts the highest Value upon his *Africa*; this Book, he tells us, is full of History, abounds with excellent Rules and Instructions, and contains a great many *Poetical Fictions*. He further observes, that *Petrarch* does therein appear to be well skill'd both in the Knowledge of *Antiquity*, and of *Nature*, and that there is a great deal of *Oratory* in it: In short, he tells us, That a *Young Man* might glory in being the Author of such a Work, and that an *Old Man* need not be asham'd of it. Though, at the same time, he takes notice of his *Half Verses*, and his *Prosodia* faults: as also some Considerable Omissions in the History of the Second *Punick War*.

Rapin



*Rapin* has a different opinion concerning the *Africa* of *Petrarch*; into what Enormities, says he, has *Petrarch* run in his *Africa*, through his Ignorance of *Aristotle's* Rules; and by his following no other Guide, but his own Genius, and Capricious Fancy. *Rap. Reflex. on Arist. Ec. Part 1. Sect xi.*

*Vossius* in his *De Poetis Latinis*, styles *Petrarch*, one of a Divine Wit, and Wonderful Learning.

*Joannes Matthæus Toscanus*, in his Account of *Italy*, Cap. v. tells us, That *Italy* never brought forth one that was equal to *Petrarch*, nay, nor any wise comparable to him.

*Erasmus* in *Ciceroniano*, pag. 155. calls *Petrarch*, one of a quick and ready Wit, a Man of great Knowledge, and no indifferent Orator. But as *Erasmus* observes, his *Latin* is not so pure as one could wish, his Style having a Tang of the preceeding Barbarous Age.

*Paulus Manutius*, in his *Comment* upon the first Book, and third Epistle of *Cicero* to his Brother *Quintus*, remarks, that *Petrarch* was the most Elegant of all the *Italian* Poets, but that he was no very good *Latin* Poet.

*Joannes Gobellinus*, in the Second Book of his *Commentaries*, concerning Pope *Pius II.* says, whom could we compare to *Franciscus Petrarcha*, if his *Latin* Works were as good as his *Italian*?

*Titus Petronius Arbiter.*

A Roman Knight, and an Elegant Writer in the time of Nero, to whom he was *Master* of the Revels. His *Satyricon* mixt of *Prose* and *Verse* together, with several Fragments, is yet extant, though very much maimed and defective in many Places. At the taking of *Alba Græca* in the Year 1688. from the *Turks*, there was found the *Satyricon* of *Petronius*, said to be Perfect and Compleat, and afterwards publish'd by one *Francis Nodotius*, a *French* Gentleman, who is very positive in the asserting it to be Compleat and Perfect; but the truth of this is much question'd, by many of the most Learned.

St. *Euremont* observes in his *Miscellaneous Essays*, That in every part of *Petronius* there appears an admirable pure Stile, as also great delicacy of Thoughts; but that which he says, is most surprising to him, is to observe with what ease, and how ingeniously he gives us all sorts of Characters. Of all the Ancient Authors *Terence* is generally said to be the best, for hitting the Humours, and Tempers of men: But, says St. *Euremont*, There is this Objection to him, That he has not extent enough; And his whole Talent goes no further, than to give a true, and natural representation of a *Servant*, an O'd Man, a Covetous Father, a Debauch'd Son, or a Slave. This is the utmost of what *Terence* can do. You are not to expect from him any thing of Gallantry, or of Passion, or of the Thoughts, or Discourse of a Gentleman But (now) *Petronius* had such an Universal Wit, that he understood the Genius of every Profession, and could turn himself to as many Humours and Tempers, as he had a Mind to. As for instance, if at any time he

he introduces one who is to *Declaim*, he would be sure to hit the Air and Style so exactly, that one would think he had us'd to *Declaim* all his Life. Never did any thing express more naturally, the Disorder of a Debauch'd life, than the Quarrels of *Eucolpion* and *Acylos* upon the Subject of *Giton*.—In a word, says St. *Euremont*, There is no Nature, no Temper, no Profession, which *Petronius* doth not admirably pursue the Genius of. He is a *Poet*, he is an *Orator*, he is a *Philosopher*, or any thing else, as he sees fit.

Mr. *Richard Wooley*, in the Second Vol. of his *Compleat Library*, Jan. 1692, pag. 101. says, that *Petronius* has the Character, as he was a Gentleman, and a Roman Knight, to have written in the most Gentleman-like Stile almost of any of that Nation, and with a free, flowing, and unaffected Eloquence, and with a Purity of Language that none in former times exceeded, nor in all things equall'd; nor in after-ages ever came nigh; not only the *Roman Eloquence*, but even the whole Body of that Language degenerating soon after into downright *Barbarism*,

The same Author pag. 143. acquaints us, That he hears from *Holland*, that some *Critical Remarks* are made by some sharp scented and smart Wits there, that seem to intimate that the late found Supplements of the *Satyricon* of *Petronius*, smell too strong of a *French Author*, to be the *Genuine Products* of *Petronius*; though they confess, they are so artfully composed, if *Fictitious*, that they will puzzle all the *Criticks* in the World to be positive in their Decisions about them. We shall only (*says Wooley*) mention Two of the Passages carp'd at, with the Exceptions made against them. First they doubt whether in *Petronius's* time, the Terms *Agens* and *Patiens* were used in an *Obscene Sence*, as in  
one

one of those Supplements : And. Secondly, in that expression found in pag. 23. *Adeo Sordidus erat Lycurgus, ut, Invitis opibus immensis, etiam quæ sunt vitæ necessaria, denegaret.* They incline to believe there is a *Gallicism*, as much Questioning whether the *Latins* ever us'd such a form of Speech, as to say, That a Covetous Man, in spite of his great Riches, grudges himself Necessaries.

*Lipsius, lib. i. Lectionum Antiquarum, cap. 8.* says, that *Petronius* was a neat and an Elegant Writer ; and, were it not that his *Latin* is sometimes too good for his Wanton Subjects, in all other respects he deserves to be Commended.

The same Author, *lib. iii. Epistolicarum Quæstionum, Epist. 2.* tells *Petrus Pythæus*, There is not among all the Poets, a more Beautiful or more agreeable Piece, than *Petronius's Satyricon*. But at the same time he takes notice, of the danger there is in reading so *obscene* an Author ; though as for himself, he brags, he was one of those, upon whom such sort of *Obscene* Discourses made no more an Impression, than a Boat upon the Sea.

*Gaspar Barthius, lib. 50. Adversar cap. 9. pag. 2357.* remarks, that were it not for the *Obscenity* of *Petronius*, there never had wrote an Author of greater Beauty, or of greater Elegancy.

*Petrus Daniel Huetius*, in his *De Origine Fabularum Romanensium, pag. 76, 77.* calls *Petronius*, the most Elegant and Polite Writer of the Age he liv'd in ; whose *Satyr* was full of Wit and Beauty. He also stiles him, a very great Critick ; and one of an exquisite taste in Learning ; but as *Huetius* observes, his *Stile* fell somewhat short of the Delicacy of his Judgment : For here-in he seem'd to be too affected, and too Elaborate, his  
Style

Style degenerating from that *Natural* and *Venerable Simplicity*, which belong'd to the happy Age of *Augustus*.

*Dryden*, in his *Essay of Heroick Plays*, tells us, That *Petronius Arbitrator*, was the most Elegant, and one of the most judicious Authors of the *Latin Tongue*; who had given many Admirable Rules for the Structure, and Beauties of an *Epick Poem*.

He further observes to us, in his *Dedic. before Examen Poeticum*; or, *The Third Part of Miscellany Poems*, that *Petronius* was the greatest Wit perhaps of all the *Romans*, yet when his Envy prevail'd upon his Judgment, to fall on *Lucan*, he fell himself in his Attempt: He perform'd worse in his Essay of the Civil War, than the Author of the *Pharsalia*: And, avoiding his Errors, says *Dryden*, has made greater of his Own.

*Rapin*, in the *Advertisement to his Reflexions of Aristotle of Poesie*, observes, That *Petronius* (who no Man of Modesty dares name, unless on the account of those Directions he gave for Writing) amongst the Ordures of his *Satyre*, gives certain Precepts for Poetry that are admirable. *Petronius* was disgusted at the Stile of *Seneca* and *Lucan*, which to him seem'd affected, and contrary to the Principles of *Aristotle*. 'Tis at them he levels with those Glances, that slip from him against the *Poetasters*, and *False Declamators*. Nothing more judicious was writ in those Days, yet (says *Rapin*) himself had not that easie and natural way, which he requires so much in Others. He gives the best Rules in the World against Affectation, which he never observed himself. For he commends even to the *Simplicity* of Style, whereas his own is not always *Natural*. To say the Truth, says *Rapin*, what is good on this Subject, (viz.

(viz. his *Precepts for Poetry*) is all taken from *Aristotle*; who is the only *Source* whence *good Sense* is to be drawn, when one goes about to Write.

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## Mrs. Katherine Philips,

A Person of that admirable Merit, and Reputation that her Memory will be Honour'd of all Men, that are Favourers of *Poetry*. One, who not only has equall'd all that is reported of the *Poetesses* of *Antiquity*, the *Lesbian Sappho*, and the *Roman Sulpitia*, but whose Merit has justly found her Admirers, amongst the greatest Poets of *our Age*. This Incomparable Person, to the Regret of all, who were acquainted with her great Worth and Fame, died of the *Small-Pox* on the 22th. of *June*, 1664. being but One and Thirty Years of Age, having not left any of her Sex, her Equal in *Poetry*.

All her several *Poems*, together with her *Translations* of *Monsieur Corneille's* Tragedies of *Pompey* and *Horace*, and several other *Translations* out of *French*, are Printed in one Volume *Fol. London*, 1678.

The *Publisher* of Mrs. Philips's Works says, We might well have call'd her *The English Sappho*, she of all the *Female Poets* of former Ages, being for her Verses and her Vertues both, the most highly to be valued; but *She* has call'd her self *Orinda*, a Name that deserves to be added to the *Number* of the *Muses*, and to live with Honour as long as *They*. Were our Language as generally

rally known to the World as the *Greek* and *Latin* were Anciently, or as the *French* is now, her *Verses* could not be confin'd within the narrow limits of our *Islands*, but would spread Themselves as far as the *Continent* has Inhabitants, or as the *Seas* have any Shore.

What Opinion *Abraham Cowley* had of *Mrs. Katherine Philips*, appears by these following Verses:

Of Female Poets, who had Names of Old,  
 Nothing is shewn, but only told,  
 And all we hear of them, perhaps may be  
 Male-Flatt'ry only, and Male-Poetrie.  
 Few minutes did their Beauties Lightning wast,  
 The Thunder of their Voice did longer last,  
 But that too soon was past. }  
 The certain proofs of our *Orinda's* Wit  
 In her own lasting Characters are Writ,  
 And they will long my Praise of them survive,  
 Though long perhaps that too may live.  
 The Trade of Glory manag'd by the Pen,  
 Though great it be, and every where is found,  
 Does bring in but small profit to us Men,  
 'Tis by the number of the Sharers drown'd;  
*Orinda* on the Female Coasts of Fame,  
 Ingrosses all the Goods of a Poetick Name.  
 She does no Partner with her see; }  
 Does all the business there alone, which we }  
 Are forc'd to carry on by a whole Company.

**Cowley's** Third Stanza on the Death of  
*Mrs. Philips.*

The Earl of *Orrery* was also a high Admirer of the  
 Famous *Orinda*, and particularly commends her *Tran-*  
 Z *station*

lation of Corneille's Pompey, in these following Verses, being part of a Copy Address to the Authress:

*You English Corneille's Pompey with such Flame,  
That you both raise our Wonder and his Fame;  
If he could Read it, he like us would call  
The Copy greater than the Original:  
You cannot mend what is already done,  
Unless you'll finish what you have begun:  
Who your Translation sees, cannot but say,  
That 'tis Orinda's Work, and but his Play.  
The French to Learn our Language now will seek,  
To hear their Greatest-Wit more nobly speak;  
Rome too would grant, were our Tongue to her known,  
Cæsar speaks better in't, than in his own.  
And all those Wreaths once circl'd Pompey's Brow,  
Exalt his Fame, less than your Verses now.*

*Direry:*

*Mrs. Philips's Horace Commended.*

*This Martial Story, which through France did come,  
And there was wrought in great Corneille's Loom;  
Orinda's Matchless Muse to Brittain brought,  
And Forreign Verse, our English Accents taught;  
So Soft, that to our shame we understand  
They could not fall but from a Lady's Hand.  
Thus while a Woman Horace did Translate,  
Horace did rise above a Roman Fate.*

*Part of the Prologue.*

Several others, as the Earl of Roscommon, Mr. Flatman, and my much esteemed Friend, James Terrell Esq; have



have also employ'd their Pens in praise of the Excellent *Orinda*.

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## *Pindarus,*

**A** *Theban Poet*, chief of the *Lyricks*. He was Contemporary with *Æschylus*, and began to Flourish about the Seventy Sixth *Olympiad*. The *Dialect* he us'd, was the *Dorick*, with a small mixture of the *Æolick*.

His *Odes* are yet extant; besides which he is said to have Written *Tragedies*, *Hymns*, *Pæans*, *Dithyramb*s, *Epicks*, *Epigrams*, and other *Poems*, in all seventeen Distinct Works.

He died about the 66. or, as some say, the 80. Year of his Age, in the 86. *Olympiad*.

*Pindar* was so highly esteem'd by *Alexander*, that at the overthrow of *Thebes*, he caused his House and Family only to be preserv'd.

*Diogenes Laertius* tells us, that *Arcefilaus*, the Philosopher, was wont to say of *Pindar*, That he fill'd the Mouth with a noble Sound, and afforded a plentiful Variety of Names and Words.

*Horace*, lib. iv. *Odarum*, Od. 2. says, That no Man could imitate, or come up to *Pindar*; and that whoever should attempt it, would certainly find himself as much disappointed, as the bold *Icarus* in the *Fable*, who undertaking to flie with Wings, whose Feathers were fasten'd together with Wax, fell into the *Sea*, and was drown'd.

He further adds, that *Pindar*, in respect of his Profound Eloquence, may very properly be resembl'd to a *Torrent*, or a *Stream*, that runs down with great violence from the top of a high Hill, and which the Rains have caus'd to swell, and to over-flow its Banks; and that one may as easily put a stop to the rapid Current of such a *Stream*, as to Circumscribe, or Limit *Pindar's* impetuous Style. To conclude, *Horace* is of the Opinion, That whatsoever this *Divine Poet* does, he still deserves *New Laurels*; that is to say, whether he fills his *Lawless Dyttherambicks* with new Words, and that he does not tie himself to any Rule either in his *Numbers*, or *Cadences*, or, that he sings the Praises of the *Gods*, of *Kings*, or of *Heroes*.

*Quintilian*, lib. x. cap. 1. says, That of all the Nine *Lirick Poets*, *Pindar* was beyond all dispute the most considerable, take him either for his Vast *Genius*, for the beauty of his Sentences and his Figures, for the abundance of his Thoughts, and the agreeable variety of his Expressions; and that in respect of his great Eloquence, which Flows like a *Torrent*, *Horace* might very well think it was impossible for any Man ever to imitate him.

*Rapin*, in his *Reflections* on *Aristotle's* Book of *Poesie*, part 2. sect. xxx. remarks, That *Pindar* is Great in his Designs, Vast in his Thoughts, bold in his Imaginations, Happy in his Expressions, and Eloquent in his Discourse: But (as *Rapin* observes) his great Vivacity hurries him sometimes past his Judgement, he gives himself too much Swing; his *Panegyricks* are perpetual Digressions, where, rambling from his Subject, he carries the Reader from Fable to Fable, from Allusion to Allusion, and from one *Chimera* to another; for he has the most unbridled and irregular *Fancy* in the *World*. But this *Irregularity*, says *Rapin*, is one part of the Character of the *Ode*,  
the

the Nature and Genius of it requiring *Transport*. *Pindar* likewise is the only Person amongst the *Greeks*, that got any Reputation by this sort of Writing, for little is remaining of the other *Lyricks*.

*Tanneguy le Fevre*, in his *Abridgement* of the *Lives* of the *Greek Poets*, tells us, that the Figures which *Pindar* uses, are noble and great; but, that they have sometimes the Air of the *Dithyrambick*, that is to say, they are bold and rash, which is by no means agreeable to such as love a *Correct* Style. He adds, that *Pindar* is a grave and serious Author; but that he loves a little too much that which they call *Sentences*; that he very often loses his Subject, by Reason of his long Digressions; and that after he has been upon the Ramble, he returns all of a sudden, when one least expects him; and at his Re-entry, he never uses any thing of Ceremony, that is to say, he takes no manner of care, to make any Connection betwixt his first Thoughts; and that which is to follow.

*Vossius*, in his *De Arte Poeticâ*, pag. 24. says, That *Pindar* us'd to brag, that *Nature* was the only Guide he followed in *Poetry*; whereas others made use of *Art*, the Rules whereof he ne'er minded, nor regarded: In which respect, he was wont to compare himself to the *Eagle*, and other *Poets* to *Ravens*.

The same Author, lib. 2. *Institutionum Poeticarum*, pag. 75. observes, That *Pindar* took too much delight in *Metaphors*, and *Lofty Expressions*; but this fault, says *Vossius*, he ought to be pardon'd, since he thought it more glorious, to get now and then a fall, than to be always groveling upon the Ground.

The Lord *Bacon*, in his *Advancement of Learning*, lib. 8. cap. 1. takes notice, That to *Pindar* it is peculiar suddenly to strike, as it were, with a Divine Scepter, the Minds of Men by rare short Sentences.

And

And in *his* History of Life and Death, he calls *Pindar*, a Poet of a high Fancie, singular in his Conceits, and a great adorer of the *Gods*.

*Gaspar Barthius* calls *Pindar* an Ingenious Author, and one who had an indifferent good stock of Learning. *lib. 39. Adversar. cap. xiii.*

And *Vossius*, in his *De Hist. Lat. pag. 819.* declares, that he well enough approves of this Character given by the Learned *Barthius* concerning *Pindar*.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in *Scaligerana* 2. remarks, That there is in *Pindar*, a great many Words not to be found any where else; but, that he sought not for them, but took them as they were then us'd, and as they naturally offer'd themselves; whereas *Nicander* and *Callimachus* made it their business, to hunt after the most obscure, and improper Words, to make use of.

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## *Marcus Accius Plautus,*

A Comical Poet, born at *Sarsina*, a City in *Italy*, who having spent all on *Players* Apparel, was fain for his living to serve a Baker in turning a Hand-Mill. At leisure hours he made his *Plays*. He died the first Year of the 149th. *Olympiad*, being 184 Years before *Christ*.

Several of his *Works* are lost, but we have yet remaining Twenty of his *Comedies*.

The

The Ancient Criticks could by no means agree, concerning the true Number of *Plautus's Comedies*; some reckoning them to be 21. Others 25. Others 40. nay, some advance them to 100. and some to 130. But the ground and occasion of this Difference, is generally thought to proceed from the mixing the Works of other *Comical Poets*, with those of *this Author*, and particularly the Comedies of one *Plautius*, whose Name being so very like that of *Plautus*, might very well be the Cause of such a Mistake.

*Aulus Gellius*, lib. vii. cap. 17. Noct. Attic. calls *Plautus*, the most Elegant of all the *Latin Authors*, and an absolute Master of that Language.

*Varro* was so taken with *Plautus*, that he says, if the *Muses* were to speak *Latin*, they would certainly use his very Stile.

*Tully*, in his first Book *De Officiis*, highly commends *Plautus's* Ingenious and Facetious way of *Raillery*.

*Macrobius*, in the Second Book of his *Saturnalia*, cap. 1. tells us, That the two most Eloquent Persons of all the *Ancients*, were *Plautus*, and *Tully*; and that these two excell'd all others in an Elegant way of *Raillery*.

*Cardinal Bona*, in his *Notitia Auctorum*, calls *Plautus*, The Tenth Muse; The exact Rule of the *Roman Language*; and the Father of Eloquence.

*Ludovicus Vives*, in his Comment upon *St. Augustine's De Civitate Dei*, lib. 2. cap. 9. says, That no Poet had a greater Vogue than *Plautus*, not only in his own life time, but in the Age following.

And *Tanaquillus Faber*, in his Second Book, *Epist.* 32. styles *Plautus*, The very Fountain of pure *Latin*.

*Lipsius*,

*Lipſius*, in the Fifth Book of his *Epistolicae Quaestiones*, *Epist.* 26. remarks, That among the *Comical Poets* none was to be preferr'd before *Plautus*; for in him we meet with not only purity of Stile, and Excellent Language; but he also affords us a great deal of Wit, Raillery, and pretty Conceits, besides that *Attick Elegancy*, which one may look for long enough in the rest of the *Roman Authors*, and never find.

*Jacobus Crucius*, in his third Book of *Epistles*, *Epist. ad Francisc. Leeuvium*, tells us, That never any thing was more pure, more elegant, and, in a Word, better skill'd in the *Latin Tongue*, than *Plautus*. So that if the *Muses* would have spoke *Latin*, they would (undoubtedly) have us'd his *Style*; all the Flower and Elegancy of the *Roman Language* being Comprehended in him. And, he further says, That as he must be a *Man of Parts*, who rightly understands the Elegancies of *Plautus*; so none but a *thick-scul'd Block-head* will pretend to find fault with *Plautus*, who writes the best *Latin* of any of the *Roman Authors*. But yet, says *Crucius*, there is one thing you must be advertised of. Have a care, when you read *Plautus* and *Terence*, of proposing to your self to follow them in every thing. For they do sometimes make use of *Old, Obsolete Words*, which if you carry but one foot from the *Theater*, they'll not keep, but stink immediately.

*Vossius*, in the Fourth Book of his *Institut. Orator.* pag. 29. observes to us, That in *Plantus's* time, those *Archaisms*, or *Old Antique Words*, which we meet with in this *Poet*, were in no wise unbecomeing an *Orator*. For this was then the mode, or way of Speaking. But in *Cicero's* Age, the fashion was quite alter'd, and these *Old, Antique Words*, were wholly laid aside.

Rapin,

*Rapin*, in his *Reflex. on Aristotle's Book of Poësie*, part 2. sect. xxvi. says, That *Plautus* is ingenious in his Designs, happy in his Imaginations, fruitful in his Invention; Yet, that there are some Insipid Jests, that escape from him in the taste of *Horace*; and his good sayings that make the People laugh, make sometimes the honestest sort to pity him: 'Tis true, observes *Rapin*, he says the best things in the World; and yet very often he says the most wretched; this a Man is subject to, when he endeavours to be too witty; he will make laughter by extravagant Expressions, and *Hyperboles*, when he cannot be successful to make it by Things. *Plautus* is not altogether so regular in the Contrivance of his Pieces, nor in the Distribution of the Acts; but he is more simple in his Subjects; For the Fables of *Terence* are ordinarily Compounded, as is seen in the *Andria*, which contains two Loves. This is what was objected to *Terence*, that he made one Latin Comedy of two Greek, the more to animate his Theatre. But then the Plots are more naturally unravell'd, than those of *Plautus*; as those of *Plautus* are more natural than those of *Aristophanes*.

*Erasmus*, in the 28th. Book of his *Epistles*, Epist. 20. is of the Opinion, that there is more exact Judgment in one Comedy of *Terence*, than in the several Comedies of *Plautus*, put them all together.

*Vossius*, in the Second Book of his *Institutiones Poeticæ*, remarks, That *Plautus* has surpass'd *Terence*, not only in the variety of his Subjects, but also in his various Phrases. But yet he is of the Opinion of those, who think that many of *Plautus's* Jests are flat and insipid; and that in his *Railleries* he is often cold and languid, nay sometimes obscene and ridiculous. And *Vossius* further tells us, that *Plautus* deserv'd not so

much Commendation as *Terence*, in that *his* aim and design was, to please the *People* in general, without any manner of distinction; whereas all that *Terence* desir'd, was, to gain the Approbation of *Some Few*, who were most considerable both for Wit and Honesty. *Vossius* also observes, That *Plautus* is neither so prudent, nor so exact as *Terence*, in that he introduces more than four Persons at once upon the Stage, all speaking at the same time; which is a thing never done by *Terence*. In a word, *Plautus* (says *Vossius*) has committed a great many faults upon all occasions, but particularly when he is to represent either the Characters of Persons, or the several Motions of different Passions.

*Julius Scaliger*, in his Third Book *De Poeticâ*, pag. 437. says, That the liberty which *Plautus* took ought to be noted: For he ventur'd at any thing, provided he could but move and affect his *Auditory*, either by making them laugh, or by introducing some *New Thing*, or Coining some *New Word*.

Hence therefore *Cælius Rhodiginus*, in the 13<sup>th</sup>. Book of his *Lectiones Antiquæ*, cap. 23. calls *Plautus*, a *Second Africa*, for that he does very often produce somewhat that is *New*, and also abounds with great *Monstrosities*.

*Julius Scaliger*, also in his Sixth Book *De Poeticâ*, pag. 766. seems to be much dissatisfied with the the *Titles* of several of *Plautus's* Comedies; as for instance, the *Rudens*, he says, should rather have been call'd *Tempestas*; the *Trinummus*, which Word is but once us'd in all the whole Comedy, might more properly have been Entitled, *Thesaurus*; and the *Truculentus*, (which sounds great, and rather raises the Expectation, than answers it,) should with more reason have bore the Title of *Rusticus*.

*Sextus*



## Sextus Aurelius Propertius,

**A**N Elegiac Poet, born at *Mevania*, a Town in *Umbria*, under the Reign of *Augustus*.

His four Books of *Elegies*, which is all that remains of him, are commonly publish'd with the Poems of *Catullus* and *Tibullus*. His Mistress, whom he makes the Subject of his Wit, was one *Hostia*, whom he calls *Cynthia*.

He was in great favour with *Cornelius Gallus*, and *Mecænas*. He died after *Virgil*, and before *Horace*.

*Borrichius*, in his *Dissertat. Acad. De Poetis*, pag. 52. says, That *Propertius*, as himself confesses, copy'd after *Philetas*, *Mimnermus*, and *Callimachus*, Greek Poets; and, as *Borrichius* observes, he was very happy in the imitating such noble *Originals*; though in one respect his *Verse* was somewhat defective, viz. in making his *Pentameter* generally end with a word of many *Syllables*. See even his very first *Distich*:

*Cynthia prima suis miserum me cepit ocellis  
Contactum nullis ante cupidinibus.*

*Lilius Gyraldus* tells us, That *Propertius* left four Books of *Elegies*, which are both Polite, and Learned. *Hofman*, in his *Lexicon*, calls *Propertius*, The chief (by far) of all the *Elegiac* Poets.

And *Quintilian*, lib. x. cap. 1. at the same time he so highly commends *Tibullus*, saith, There were yet Those who give *Propertius* the Preference.

*Rolandus Mareſius*, in his Second Book, *Epist.* 6. ſays Tho' it may be thought a piece of Confidence in him to contradict that judicious *Critic*, *Quintilian*, who ſeems to prefer *Tibullus*; yet, for my part, ſays he, I own I am one of Thoſe, who give the preference to *Propertius*. For although *Tibullus* be wonderfully Pleaſant and Elegant, and much more correſt in the *Latin* Tongue, than the *other*, (who often imitates the *Greek* Poets,) and is alſo more curious and exact in his *Verſe*; yet *Propertius* ſeems to ſurpaſs him in Learning, and alſo in Sweetneſs of Temper, ſo very obliging and good Natur'd is he: But, as *Mareſius* obſerves, though *Propertius* was of ſuch a ſweet, calm Temper, yet ſometimes he expreſſes his Paſſions, with as much Heat and Vehemency, as the hotteſt Lover of them all.

*Turnebus*, in the Eleventh Book of his *Adverſaria*, cap. 15. obſerves to us, That the *Verſes* of *Propertius* are ſo pleaſant and delightful, that one would almoſt think, the Muſes themſelves dictated them to the Poet. Only, ſays *Turnebus*, I could wiſh, he had employ'd his moſt curious, fine Fancy, upon ſome other Subject, than that of *Love*; that ſo, he might be read by Youth with greater ſafety, than now he can.

*Caspar Barthius*, in the Ninth Book of his *Adverſaria*, cap. x. remarks, That amongſt all the *Ancients* there is not any Writer, that has a ſweeter ſort of Learning, nor (as he expreſſes it) a more Learned ſort of ſweetneſs, than *Propertius*; which Author, ſays *Barthius*, the better you are acquainted with, the more you will love him: For even thoſe things, which at firſt ſight may ſeem the moſt obſcure, will, after you have once ſearch'd into them, by a certain natural beauty, appear to be the moſt delightful and agreeable.

The same Author, *lib. 32. cap. 9.* calls *Propertius*, a most Ingenious, a most Accurate, and a most Learned Writer; and one who was incomparably well skill'd in, as well as a true Lover of, the Greek *Elegancies*

*Lipsius*, in the Second Book of his *Antiquæ Lectiones*, *cap. x.* tells us, That He who loveth not *Propertius*, can never be a Favourite of the *Muses*. For so great a Sweetness is there in his *Verses*, that, as the Comical Poet observes; *Nil nisi mulsæ loquitur*, Every word in them seems to be mixt with Honey. And so full of Learning are they, that we are apt to think, says *Lipsius*, They were dictated even by *Apollo* himself.

*Rapin*, in his *Reflex.* on *Aristotle's* Book of *Poesie*, *part 2d. sect. 29.* says, That they who have writ Elegy best amongst the *Latins*, are *Tibullus*, *Propertius*, and *Ovid*. *Tibullus*, says *Rapin*, is Elegant and polite; *Propertius* noble and high; but *Ovid* is to be preferr'd to both; because he is more natural, more moving, and more passionate; and thereby he has better express'd the Character of *Elegy*, than the others.

*Julius Scaliger*, in his Sixth Book *De Poeticâ*, *pag. 854.* takes notice, That *Propertius* has an easie, natural Air; and that he has very well express'd the Character of *Elegy*; that in his Opinion, *Propertius* is more Polite and Elegant, than the *Criticks* generally allow him to be; tho' he must own, he did affect Things out of the Common Road.

He further observes, That *Propertius* was somewhat particular in the mixing *Fables* (upon every occasion) with his *Verses*, (he looking upon *Fable* to be the very Soul of *Poetry*,) tho' he did therein follow the same Counsel, which the famous *Corinna* once gave to *Pindar*. And in this respect is it, says *Vossius* in the third  
Book

Book of his *Institutiones Poeticæ*, pag. 35. that *Propertius* had the advantage of *Tibullus*; because nothing adds more to the luster of an *Elegy*, than *Historical Stories* and *Fables*.

*Lipsius*, in the third Book of his *Variæ Lectiones*, cap. vii. remarks, That there is a great deal of abstruse Learning in *Propertius*, and, that besides the Elegancy and Acuteness of his *Sentences*, there are many things even in his very *Words*, which deserve both our notice, and our praise. One thing indeed is very new, and I cannot tell, says *Lipsius*, whether the like can be found in any other Author, and that is, his peculiar way of using the *Simple Verbs* instead of the *Compounds*, and out of a strange Opinion of the *Elegancy*, giving the *Simple Verbs* the very same Signification, that the *Compound Verbs* ought to have; which he does often do. But to make the thing yet plainer, says *Lipsius*, I will give you an example, or two. Thus you shall find in this Poet, the Verb *Seſtari* us'd for *Inſeſtari*; as also *Teſtari* for *Deſteſtari*; which is contrary to all other Authors. And many other Instances of the like nature may be found in this Author; which whoever is ignorant of, says *Lipsius*, may happen often to be plung'd in reading *Propertius*.

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## Aurelius Prudentius Clemens,

**A** Christian Poet, Born at Saragosa a City in Spain, in the Year 348. He was at First by his Profession an Advocate, or Lawyer; but afterwards he was advanc'd by the Emperour *Honorius* to very considerable Preferment. When he was Fifty Seven Years of Age, he retir'd, and applied himself Chiefly to the Writing *Divine Poems*. There is no certain Account of his Death, tho' some pretend to say it was in the Year 412.

He Wrote in *Latin Verse Psychomachia, De Martyrum Coronis*, and some other Works which are yet Extant.

*Petrus Crinitus*, in his *De Poetis Latinis*, says, That *Prudentius's* Poems were Writ in several sorts of Verse: Whereby it plainly appears, that, considering the time he Liv'd in, he was the most to be valu'd of all the *Christian Poets*, not only for his Learned Figurative Expressions, but also for his Grave, and Weighty Sentences.

*Sidonius Apollinaris*, no Contemptible Author, (says *Crinitus*, makes no Scruple to joyn *Prudentius* to *Horace*.

*Bellarmin*, in his *De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis*, says, That *Prudentius* Wrote Incomparable Verse.

Cardinal *Bona*, in his *Notitia Actorum*, calls *Prudentius*, The most sweet *Christian Pindar*, and in Allusion to his Name, The most *Prudent Christian Poet*.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in *Scaligerana* 1. calls *Prudentius*, a good Poet.

And

And in *Scaligerana* 2. pag. 51. he Stiles him, an Elegant Poet.

*Caspar Barthius*, in the Eighth Book of his *Adversaria*, cap. 11. says, That never any Man Wrote more Divine-  
y of Matters relating to the *Christians*, than *Prudentius*.

*Vossius* also, in his *De Historicis Latinis*, tells us, That *Prudentius* has done great Service to the *Christian History*, by what he has writ concerning the Sufferings of several *Martyrs*: 'Tis true, says *Vossius*, he wrote in *Verse*; but for all that, such as handle this Subject in *Prose*, are wont to fetch the true Matter of Fact from this our Poet.

*Lilius Gyraldus* assures us, That *Prudentius* was a Person of very great Learning, but of no Eloquence; which, as *Gyraldus* thinks, he altogether neglected; since the only thing he minded, was, the advancement of True, *Christian Piety*.

*Caspar Barthius*, in his 27th. Book of the *Adversaria*, cap. v. says, That *Prudentius* contains a Treasure of Curious, delicate Things, and that we ought not to pass him by, as a Common Ordinary Poet.

And the same Author, lib. 21. cap. 4. informs us, That the true reason, why *Prudentius* is less Elegant in some places than in others, was his imitating *Holy Writ*, and that then he did voluntarily alter his Style: But, that besides this, he was often forc'd to transcribe the Writings of the *Monks*, who generally wrote in a barbarous Style; and this was that, which chiefly occasion'd the breaking his Stile, and caus'd him to write otherwise, than else he would.

*Hofman*, in his *Lexicon*, tells us, That *Prudentius*, when he was 57 Years of Age, began to write in *Verse*  
concerning

concerning *Ecclesiastical Matters*, which he perform'd both Learnedly and Elegantly, unless it were, that sometimes, in *Forreign words*, and especially in the *Greek*, he minded not the *Quantity of Syllables*, when yet the *Greek Inscriptions*, or *Titles* of his Books, do plainly shew, that He understood *Greek* well enough.

*Borrichius*, in his *Dissert. Acad. De Poetis*, pag. 72. affirms, That *Prudentius*, for Eloquence, Piety, and Learning, transcended the *Genius* of the Age; and that his *Verses*, bating their *false Quantities*, are for the most part smooth, lofty, and Majestick.

*Gaspar Scioppius*, in his *Consultationes*, pag. 43. says, That *Prudentius* is (indeed) a tolerable Poet, but sometimes he is led away with the Custom of the Age; and at other times he runs too much upon old, Antique Words, and imitates *Lucretius* too much.

*Ellies du Pin*, in the Third Tome of his *New Bibliotheca of Ecclesiastical Authors*, remarks, That *Prudentius* is no very good Poet; that his Expressions are often Barbarous, and very different from that pure Style, which was us'd in the Age of *Augustus*. His Thoughts, or Notions, says *du Pin*, are Excellent, and altogether becoming a good *Christian*. There are some places Elegantly written, and pleasant enough to be read.

## *Renatus Rapin,*

A Jesuite, born at *Tours* in *France*, 1621. A Critical Judge of the *Poets*, as appears by his *Reflexions* on *Aristotle's* Treatise of *Poetry*, and a Poet also himself of no Obscure Fame by his *Latin* Poem of *Horticulture* or *Gardening*, which hath been most ingeniously Translated into *English*, by my Kinsman, *John Evelin*, the younger.

*Dryden*, in his *Apology* for *Heroick Poetry*, says, That *Rapin*, were all other *Criticks* lost, is alone sufficient to teach anew the *Rules of Writing*.

*Oldham*, in the *Advertisement* before his *Imitation of Horace's Art of Poetry*, tells us, That *Rapin* is one of the best *Criticks*, which these latter Ages have produc'd.

*Rimer*, in his *Preface* to *Rapin's Reflexions on Aristotle of Poese*, informs us, That *Rapin* is as well known amongst the *Criticks*, as *Aristotle* to the *Philosophers*: Never Man gave his Judgment so generally, and never was Judgment (says *Rimer*) more free and impartial. He might be thought an Enemy to the *Spaniards*, were he not as sharp on the *Italians*; and he might be suspected to envy the *Italians*, were he not as severe on his own *Country-Men*.

Certainly, says *Monsieur Baillet*, in the *Jugemens des Sçavans*, That Man must be altogether void of Common Sense, and also of that light which distinguishes a Man from a *Beast*, who can in the least question, whether *Rapin* was a great Poet, after he has once seen his *Eglogues*, his four Books of *Gardening*, his

two



two Books of *Heroick Poems*, his *Elegies*, and his *Odes*.

*Borrichius*, pag. 117. tells us, That all the *Eglogues* of *Rapin*, both *Sacred* and *Profane*, were writ with exquisite Judgment.

*Monsieur de la Roque*, in the *Journal des Sçavans*, Tome x. pag. 124. remarks, That although the *Eglogues* were not esteem'd the most considerable of *Rapin's Poems*, yet one might discern in them a certain *Air* of that *secret* and *conceal'd loftiness*, which *Virgil* has dispers'd in his *Eglogues*.

The same *De la Roque*, pag. 126. observes, That *Rapin* in his *Elegies* chose rather to take the Character of *Ovid*, than that of *Tibullus* or *Propertius*; because He is much more just in his Designs, and in his Relating Matters he is fuller of Circumstances; although the *Other Two* have written with greater Elegancy, and with an *Air* that is more harmonious, and more agreeable to *Verse*.

And as for his *Odes*, *De la Roque* tells us, That *Rapin* has mixt to some of his *Heroick Subjects* others that are soft and tender, that so he might follow *both* the Characters of that Kind, which are the *Delicate* and the *Sublime*.

And *De la Roque*, pag. 124, 125. of the same *Journal*, informs us, That *Rapin* in his Poem of *Gardening*, has excell'd himself. All the World, says he, owns, never any Man came so near *Virgil*, and that *Rapin* was the only Person, who could make us any amends, for what we might have expected, of this Kind, from the famous *Virgil*. Nay, *De la Roque* tells us expressly, that *Rapin* has the very Spirit of *Virgil* in his *Idea's*, in his *Expressions*, in his *Figures*, and particularly in his *Transitions*,

just as *Virgil* had imitated the *Transitions* of *Lucretius*, to express himself by.

*Sallo d'Hedouville*, in the *Journal des Sçavans*, Febr. 9. 1665. is also a great Admirer of *Rapin's* Poem of *Gardening*. He tells us, that this Holy Father, *Rapin*, has so ingenious a way of mixing *Fable* to the most curious *Researches* of *Philosophy*; and that he has handled this Subject of *Gardening*, in so pleasant and agreeable a manner, that we have not now much reason to be concern'd, that *Virgil* had left his Work of the *Georgicks* imperfect in this particular, since we see *Rapin* hath so happily supply'd this Defect.

The German Criticks at *Lipsick*, in the *Acta Eruditorum*, Decemb. 1684. pag. 560. calls *Rapin*, a Person of most Exquisite Learning, and one that was wonderfully expert in reading Ancient Authors.

*Monsieur de Segrais*, in the Preface to his Translation of *Virgil*, says, That *Rapin* is not only a good Judge of Poetry, but also an Excellent Poet too.

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## The Earl of Rochester.

**J**ohn Wilmot Earl of Rochester, Viscount Athlone in Ireland, and Baron of Adderbury in Oxfordshire, was Born at Ditchley near Woodstock in the said County, April — 1648. He Died in the Rangers Lodge in Woodstock-Park, on the 26th. of July, 1680.

Dr. Burnet, in his Account of the Life and Death of this Noble Lord, pag. 7, 8. says, He had a strange Vivacity

city of Thought, and Vigour of Expression: His Wit had a Subtility and Sublimity both, that were scarce imitable. His Style was Clear and Strong: When he used Figures, they were very Lively, and yet far enough out of the Common Road: He had made himself Master of the Ancient and Modern Wit, and of the Modern *French* and *Italian*, as well as the *English*. He lov'd to Talk and Write of *Speculative Matters*, and did it with so fine a Thread, that even those who hated the Subjects that his Fancy ran upon, yet could not but be charm'd with his way of Treating of them. *Boileau* among the *French*, and *Cowley* among the *English* Wits, were those he admired most. Sometimes other mens thoughts mixt with his Composures, but that flow'd rather from the Impressions they made on him when he Read them, by which they came to return upon him as his own Thoughts; than that he servilely copied from any. For few Men ever had a bolder flight of Fancy, more steadily govern'd by Judgment, than he had; no wonder, says *Burnet*, a Young Man so made, and so improv'd, was very acceptable in a Court.

He laid out his Wit (*pag. 14.*) very freely in *Libels* and *Satyrs*, in which he had a peculiar Talent of mixing his Wit with his Malice, and fitting both with such apt words, that Men were tempted to be pleas'd with them: From thence his *Composures* came to be easily known, for few had such a way of tempering these together as he had; so that when any thing extraordinary that way came out, as a Child is Father'd sometimes by its Resemblance, so was it laid at his door, as its Parent and Author.

The *Anonymous* Writer of the *Preface* before *Valentinian*, tells us, That what most of all deserves admiration in my Lord *Rocheſter*, was his *Poetry*, which alone is Subject enough for perpetual *Panegyrick*. But the Character  
of

of it is so generally known; it has so Eminently distinguish'd it self from that of other men, by a Thousand irresistible Beauties; every Body is so well acquainted with it, by the effect it has had upon them, that to trace and single out the several *Graces*, may seem a Task as Superfluous, as to describe to a *Lover* the *Lines* and *Features* of his *Mistress's* Face. 'Tis sufficient to observe, that his *Poetry* like *himself*, was all *Original*, and has a Stamp so particular, so unlike any thing that has been Writ before, that as it disdain'd all Servile Imitation, and Copying from others, so neither is it capable (in the Opinion of *this Author*) of being Copy'd, any more than the manner of his Discourse could be Copy'd; the Excellencies are too many and too Masterly: On the other side, the Faults are few, and those inconsiderable; their Eyes must be better than Ordinary, who can see the Minute Spots, with which so Bright a Jewel is stain'd, or rather set off, for those it has, are of the kind, which, *Horace* says, can never Offend.

— *Quas aut incuria fudit ;  
Aut humana parùm cavit Natura.*

Such little Negligences as Humanity cannot be exempt from, and such as perhaps were necessary to make his Lines run Natural and Easy; for as nothing is more disagreeable either in *Verse* or *Prose* than a slovenly looseness of Style; so on the other hand too nice a Correctness will be apt to *deaden* the *Life*, and make the *Piece* too *Stiff*; between these two *Extreams*, is the just Character of my Lord *Rocheſter's* Poetry to be found.

*Anthony Wood*, in the second Volume of *Athenæ Oxonienses*, pag. 489. says, That *Andrew Marvell*, who was a good Judge of Wit, did use to say, That *Rocheſter* was  
the

*the only Man in England, that had the true Vein of Satyr. He was (says Wood) a Person of most rare Parts, and his Natural Talent was Excellent, much improv'd by Learning and Industry, being thoroughly acquainted with all the Classick Authors, both Greek and Latin; a thing very rare (if not peculiar to him) among those of his Quality. He knew also how to use them, not as other Poets have done, to Transcribe and Steal from, but rather to better and improve them by his Natural Fancy.*

But notwithstanding the many Excellencies of this *Noble Poet*, yet that which was no small Blemish to some of his *Poems*, was his *Immodest* and *Obscene Expressions*; since there is no sort of *Dress* does so ill become *true Poetry*, as that of *Obscenity*.

*Here, as in all things else, is most unfit;  
Bare Ribaldry, that poor pretence to Wit;  
Such Nauseous Songs by a late Author made,  
Call an unwilling Censure on his Shade.  
Not that warm Thoughts of the Transporting Joy,  
Can Shock the Chastest, or the Nicest Cloy;  
But Obscene Words, too gross to move desire,  
Like Heaps of Fewel do but choak the Fire:  
On other Theams He well deserves our Praise,  
But palls that Appetite he meant to raise.*

**Bulgr.** Essay on Poetry.

*Jacobus*

## Jacobus Sannazarius, other- wise call'd *Actius Sincerus*,

**B**Orn at *Naples*, *Anno Dom.* 1458. A Poet of very great Fame and Reputation for *Latin Verse*, gain'd by his Poem *De Partu Virginis*, his *Piscatory Eclogues*, *Epigrams*, &c. He died in the Year 1530.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in *Scaligerana* 1. calls *Sannazarius*, a Poet of great Elegancy, one of an Excellent Invention, and who (as he tells us) is very well worth our Reading.

*Boissardus*, in his *Icones Virorum Illustrum*, says, That *Sannazarius* was, in respect of his great Elegancy and Learning, to be compar'd with any of the *Ancients*.

*Ludovicus de la Cerda*, in his *Comment* upon the 734<sup>th</sup>. Verse of the 7<sup>th</sup>. Book of *Virgil's Æneids*, is of Opinion, That *Sannazarius* did not only surpass all the Poets of his time, but also, that he contributed more to the Glory and Reputation of the City of *Naples*, than ever *Statius Papinius* did formerly.

*Borrichius*, in his *Dissertationes Academicæ de Poetis*, pag. 105. tells us, That *Sannazarius*, of *Naples*, carried the *Latin Poësie* to a great height; and that in respect of nobleness of fancy, as also for imitating the Best of the *Ancients*, for *Poetical Fictions*, and for Acuteness, there have been scarce Any since his time, who have gone beyond him. He says, that *Sannazarius* lies buried at *Pausilypum* (about three Miles from *Naples*) close by *Virgil*; it being but reasonable, that as they were Men  
of

of equal Skill, and who affected the very same sort of Learning, so even in their *Graves* they should not be at any great distance, *one* from the *other*.

*He further remarks*, That never any thing was more *Correct* than *Sannazarius's* Verse, as appears by that most Excellent *Epick* Poem of his, *De Partu Virginis*, compris'd in three Books. In a word, says *Borrichius*, there is nothing that *Sannazarius* has writ, but what very well deserves to be read, and that with the greatest Attention, by all who study and affect *Poetry*; so incomparably well does he write upon any Subject: To conclude, his *Eclogues* are polite; his *Elegies* are easie and run well; and his *Epigrams* are Ingenious, and without any force, or constraint.

*Erasmus*, in *Ciceroniano*, pag. 205. says, That *Accius Sincerus* was wonderfully happy in his Poem *De Partu Virginis* for which he receiv'd prodigious Applause from the *Roman Theatre*; and that even two *Popes*, viz *Leo x.* and *Clement 7th* had (each of Them) writ him a Letter of Complements, to congratulate him thereupon.

In this respect, says *Erasmus*, is *Accius Sincerus* to be preferr'd before his Predecessor *Pontanus*, for that he did not think much, to spend some part of his time in treating upon *Sacred Matters*, which Subject he handl'd neither carelessly, nor unpleasantly. But yet, says *Erasmus*, in my Opinion, he would have deserv'd more Commendation, had he shew'd a little more Devotion, upon so Sacred, and so Divine a Subject.

*Erasmus*, in the same place, pag. 206. remarks, That this Poem *De Partu Virginis* has lost much of it's Beauty, (which otherwise it might have had) by a too frequent use of *Synalæpha's*. And, in Conclusion, he adds, That the whole Poem in general, was fitter for a *Young Man*, who had a mind to try what he could do in

*Poetry*; than for a grave, serious, and Religious Person, who really intended any Service to the Publick; And therefore *Erasmus* says, in this respect, he prefers that one *Hymn* of *Prudentius De Natali Jesu*, before those three little Books of *Accius Sincerus*.

*Rapin*, in his *Reflexions* on *Aristotle's* Treatise of *Poesie*, part 1. sect. 32. observes to us, That *Sannazarius* has some touches of the noble Air of *Virgil*, but not many; that he has only copy'd *Virgil's Phrases*, without expressing his Spirit; and that whenever he strains himself, to come up to *Virgil*, he soon falls and returns again to his own *Genius*; and, in a Word, amidst the vain Efforts of a *Servile* imitation, there continually escape from him some Strokes of his own Natural Spirit.

The same Author, part 2. sect. xvi. of those *Reflexions*, tells us, That *Sannazarius*, who was famous among the *Italian Poets* for his Poem *De Partu Virginis*, had a good *Genius* for writing in *Latin*; for the purity of his Style is admirable; but the Contrivance of his Fable has no delicateness, nor is his Manner any wise proportionable to the dignity of his Subject.

And in his *Thirteenth Section* of this *Second Part* of his *Reflexions*, he takes notice, That *Sannazarius*, in his Poem *De Partu Virginis*, has judiciously mingl'd the Fables of *Paganism*, with the *Mysteries* of *Christian Religion*.

*Paulus Jovius*, in his *Elogies* of *Learned Men*, says, That *Sannazarius's* Poem, *De Partu Virginis*, took him up no less than *Twenty Years* time the *Composing*; and that at last he was mightily disappointed, since his *Piscatory Eclogues*, which he made in his Youth, quite eclips'd the glory of this and all his other Works too.

*Lilius*



*Lilius Gyraldus*, notwithstanding he highly commends *Sannazarius*, for his Diligence, his Exactness, his Solid Judgment, and his great skill in *Poetry*; yet he cannot but blame him, for having spent so much of his time, upon this one Poem, *De Partu Virginis*; which by his so often *filig* and altering, instead of making it better, he (really) made it worse, as *Gyraldus* thought.

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## *Sappho,*

**A**N Excellent *Poetess*, born in the Isle of *Lesbos*; She was call'd The *Ninth Lyrick*, and The *Tenth Muse*. She wrote *Epigrams*, *Elegies*, *Jambicks*, *Monodies*, and nine Books of *Lyrick Verses*; and was the Inventress of that kind of Verse, which from her is call'd the *Sapphick*; she attain'd to no small Applause in her Contention, first with *Stesichorus*, and then with *Alcæus*. According to *Calvisius*, *Sappho* flourish'd in the time of *Nabonassar*, in the Year of the World, 3341. about six Hundred and seven Years before *Christ*. She wrote in the *Æolick Dialect*.

Some tell us, there were Two of this Name, who liv'd in the same Country, and at the same time, and both of them *Poetesses*. But *Ovid*, *Statius*, and others of the *Latin Poets*, acknowledge but one *Sappho*; in memory of whom the *Romans* erected a most Noble Statue of *Porphyry*; And the Citizens of *Mitylene*, the Chief City of the Island *Lesbos*, had so great an honour for

her Memory, that they caus'd her *Image* to be *Stamp'd* upon their *Coin*.

*Vossius*, in the third Book of his *Institutiones Poeticæ*, pag. 78, and 97. says, That none of the *Greek Poets* excell'd *Sappho* for sweetness of Verse; and that *She* made *Archilochus* the Model of her Style; but at the same time, she took great care, to soften, and sweeten that sharp Style of his.

*Rapin*, in his *Reflex.* on *Aristotle's* Treatise of *Poesie*, part 2. sect. 30. tells us, It may be avow'd by that which is left us of the Fragments of *Sappho*, that *Demetrius* and *Longinus* have great reason to boast so highly in their Works, of the admirable *Genius* of this *Woman*; for there are found some *Strokes* of *Delicacy* the most *fine*, and the most *passionate* in the World.

The *Authors* of the *Athenian Mercury*, Vol. v. Numb. 13. Quest 8. remark, That the *Fragment* consisting but of a few Lines, which we have of *Sappho's*, carries something in it so *Soft*, *Lushious* and *Charming*, even in the sound of the Words, that *Catullus* himself, who has endeavour'd somewhat like 'em in *Latin*, comes infinitely short of 'em; And so have all the Rest, who have writ their own Thoughts on that Subject.

*Monsieur Bayle*, in his *Nouvelles de la Republique des Lettres*, Novemb. 1684. pag. 396. says, Never were two Persons in this World so much of a Temper, as *Sappho* and *Anacreon*; and both of them the most *Amorous* Creatures in Nature. 'Tis a Thousand pities, says *Bayle*, that they did not live at the same time, as *Mademoiselle de Scudery* (very much to the advantage of her *Romance*) supposes they did: If they had, (says *Bayle*,) they ought to have been *Husband* and *Wife*, that so the World might have seen, what would have been the Effect,

Effect, of Two such loving Tempers, and such Delicate Souls.

*He also observes, that They are so much alike in their way of Writing, that it is somewhat difficult to distinguish the One from the Other.*

*Hofman, in his Lexicon, tells us, Some Authors are of Opinion, that the Elegy which Ovid made under the name of Sappho, and which is infinitely beyond his other Elegies, was all, or at least the most Beautiful Part of it, stole from the Poems of the Elegant Sappho.*

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## Lucius Annæus Seneca,

Born at Corduba in Spain, both Philosopher and Poet, and Uncle to Lucan. He died Anno Domini, 65. or, as others say, 68.

There are ten Latin Tragedies, which generally go under his Name, viz. *Hercules Furens; Thyestes; Thebais; Hippolytus; Oedipus; Troades; Medea; Agamemnon; Hercules Oetæus; and Octavia.*

Monsieur Baillet tells us, That of all the Ten Latin Tragedies, which are Collected, and Publish'd in a body, under the Name of Seneca, it is generally agreed, that the best of them were writ by this famous Philosopher, Nero's Tutor, and that He was (really) the Author of the *Medea, the Hippolytus, and the Troades.* The Rest, says Baillet, have their Excellencies, and are to be valued; although it is not yet well known, by whom they were writ. But no body, says he, denies, but the

the meanest, and that which seems the most unworthy the Name of *Seneca*, is the *Ostavia*; to which others joyn the *Thebais*, which is the Work of a *Declaimer*, who did not understand what belong'd to *Tragedy*.

*Vossius*, in his *De Poetis*, places *Seneca* among the *Poets*; tho' at the same time he tells us, He did not look upon him to be the Author of all those several *Tragedies*, which we commonly see ascrib'd to him. But yet, says *Vossius*, There is no doubt to be made, but some of them were really his.

To the same Effect says *Borrichius*, pag. 56. Tho' the Learned are not agreed, that all the several *Tragedies*, which come out under the Name of *Seneca*, may justly be attributed to him; yet they are generally inclin'd to think, that the far greatest part of those *Tragedies* were writ by him.

The same *Borrichius* also tells us, That *Seneca* writ in a pure Tragical Strain, shewing a decent Gravity; and that he was no ways inferior to any of the *Greeks*, either for a Majestick Stile, or for an exquisite way of expressing himself.

*Lipsius* could by no means believe, That *Seneca* ever wrote the *Troades*; he had so mean an Opinion of this *Tragedy*, that he gave it for granted, it was writ either by some little, paltry Poet, or else by some ignorant Pedant.

But *Joseph Scaliger* was much offended at this severe Censure of *Lipsius*, from whom he entirely differ'd, calling this *Tragedy*, *A Divine Work*, and to be prefer'd before any of the other *Nine*, all which he believes were writ by *Seneca*.

*Joseph Scaliger* also, in *Scaligerana* 1. says, That *Seneca* the Poet is a good Author; but, that we are not

to expect from him that exactness, which the Rules of the *Old Tragedy* requir'd.

*Julius Scaliger*, in his Sixth Book *De Poeticâ*, pag. 839. tells us, That for a lofty Majestick sort of Verse, *Seneca* came not behind the best of the *Greek Poets*; nay, that he excell'd *Euripides* in Politeness and Beauty. It must be own'd, says *Scaliger*, that Invention (indeed) is the peculiar property of the *Greeks*; but *Seneca's* is not beholden to *them*, for that lofty Air, that harmonious sound, that smart Wit, and that briskness of Fancy, which every where abounds in him. But yet, *he adds*, that, whenever *Seneca* has a mind to imitate *Sophocles*, he is very unfortunate, and has no luck at it.

*Rapin*, in the first part of his *Reflexions on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie*, sect. 25. remarks, That *Seneca* knows nothing of the *Manners*. He says, He is a fine Speaker, who is eternally uttering pretty Sayings, but is in no wise *Natural* in what he speaks, and whatever Persons he makes to speak, they always have the Meen of *Actors*.

The same Author, in the Second part of these *Reflexions*, sect. 22. observes, That *Seneca's* Verse are pompous, his Thoughts lofty, because he would dazzle; but the Contrivance of his *Fables* are of no great Character. This Author (says *Rapin*) pleases himself too much in giving his own *Idea's*, instead of *real Objects*; and he represents not always very regularly, what is to be represented.

*St. Euremont*, in his *Miscellaneous Essays*, says, He does much more esteem the Person of *Seneca*, than the Works of *Seneca*. I have a great respect, says *he*, for the Tutor of *Nero*, the Gallant of *Agrippina*, and for that Ambitious Man who pretended to the *Empire*: Of the *Philosopher*, and *Writer*, I make but little account, and am

am affected neither with his Stile, nor his Thoughts. His *Latin* has nothing of resemblance to that of *Augustus's* time; it is neither easie, nor natural; all made up of Points, all fanciful and conceited; more of the heat of *Africa*, or *Spain* in them, than the Beauty of *Greece* or *Italy*. You see *there* abrupt things, that have indeed the Air and Shape of Sentences; but which have neither their Solidity, nor their good Sence: Which whet and spur on the *Fancy*, without gaining the *Judgment*. His forced Discourse (says *St. Euremont*) Communicates to Me a sort of Constraint; and the Soul, instead of finding *there* its Satisfaction and Repose, meets with Trouble and Affliction.

*Nero*, tho' one of the most Wicked Princes of the World, was yet very Ingenious, and had near him a sort of *Under-Masters*, extreamly curious, who us'd *Seneca* as a *Pedant*, and turn'd him into *ridicule*. I am not, says *St. Euremont*, of the Opinion of *Berville*, who imagin'd that the false *Eumolpus* of *Petronius* was the true *Seneca*. If so be *Petronius* would have given him an injurious Character, it had been under the Person of a *Pedantick Philosopher*, rather than an *impertinent Poet*. Besides, 'tis as it were impossible to find any Agreement therein.

*Seneca* was the Richest Man in the Empire, and always commended Poverty. *Eumolpus*, a Poet very low in the World, and in the despair of his Fortune, he complain'd of the Ingratitude of the Age, and found no other Comfort than that *bonæ Mentis soror est Paupertas*. If *Seneca* had Vices, he conceal'd them with Care under the appearance of Wisdom: *Eumolpus* was so vain as to shew *his*, and us'd his Pleasures with much liberty.

I don't apprehend then (says *St. Euremont*) upon what *Berville* could ground his Conjecture. But I am deceiv'd,

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says he, if all that *Petronius* says of the Style of his time, of the Corruption of Eloquence and Poetry, if the *Controversiæ sententiis vibrantibus pictæ*, which offended him so much, if the *Vanus sententiarum Strepitus*, wherewith he was astonish'd, doth not belong to *Seneca*, if the *per Ambages & Deorum Ministeria*, &c. did not relate to the *Pharsalia* of *Lucan*: If the Encomiums, which he gives to *Cicero*, *Virgil*, and *Horace*, were not design'd in Contempt of the *Uncle*, and *Nephew*. Be it as it will, to return to what appears to Me (says *St. Euremont*) concerning *Seneca*, - I never read his Writings, without being of quite contrary Sentiments to those which he would inspire his Readers with. If he attempts to persuade Poverty, I long for his Riches; his Vertue frightens me, and the least dispos'd to Vice would abandon himself to Pleasures, by the description he gives of them. In a Word, he speaks so much of Death, and leaves me such Melancholy *Idea's*, that I do my utmost Endeavours not to improve by his Lecture. The finest Things in his Works, are the Examples and Citations he mingles therein. As he liv'd in a curious Court, and knew a thousand fine Things that occur'd in All Ages, he produces some that are very agreeable; sometimes of the *Greeks*, sometimes of *Cæsar*, *Augustus*, and *Mecænas*; for after all, his Parts and Knowledge were infinite: But his Style, says *St. Euremont*, has nothing that affects me; his Opinions are too severe: And 'tis ridiculous that one who liv'd in abundance, and was so careful of himself, should encourage nothing but *Poverty* and *Death*.

## William Shakespear,

ONE of the most Eminent Poets of his Time; He was Born at *Stratford upon Avon* in *Warwickshire*, and flourish'd in the Reigns of *Queen Elizabeth*, and *King James the First*. He died on the 23<sup>d</sup> of *April* 1616. in the 53<sup>d</sup>. Year of his Age.

He has Writ about Forty Six Plays, all which except Three, are Bound in one Volume in *Folio*, Printed at *London*, 1685.

*Gerard Langbaine*, in his Account of the *English Dramatick Poets*, says, That *Shakespear's* Natural Genius to Poetry was so Excellent, that like those *Diamonds*, which are found in *Cornwall*, Nature had little, or no occasion for the Assistance of Art to polish it. The truth is, 'Tis agreed on by most, that his Learning was not extraordinary; And I am apt to believe, (*says Langbaine*) that his skill in the *French* and *Italian* Tongues, exceeded his knowledg in the *Roman* Language. Few Persons that are acquainted with *Dramatick Poetry*, but are convinced of the Excellency of his Compositions, in all Kinds of it. *Langbaine* tells us, for his part he esteems *Shakespear's* Plays beyond any that have ever been Publish'd in our Language: And though he extreemly admires *Johnson*, and *Fletcher*; yet (*says he*) I must still aver, that when in Competition with *Shakespear*, I must apply to them, what *Justus Lipsius* Writ in his Letter to *Andreas Schottus*, concerning *Terence* and *Plautus*, when Compar'd; *Terentium amo, admiror, sed Plautum magis*.

*Edward Phillips*, in his *Theatrum Poetarum*, calls *Shakespear*, The Glory of the *English Stage*; whose Nativity  
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at *Stratford upon Avon*, is the highest Honour that Town can boast of; from an *Actor* of *Tragedies* and *Comedies*, he became a *Maker*; and such a *Maker*, says *Phillips*, that though some others may perhaps pretend to a more exact *Decorum* and *Oeconomie*, especially in *Tragedy*, never any exprest a more Lofty and *Tragick* height; never any represented *Nature* more purely to the *Life*; And where the Polishments of *Art* are most wanting, as probably his Learning was not extraordinary, he pleases with a certain *Wild* and *Native Elegance*.

*Dryden* tells us, in his *Essay of Dramatick Poesie*, pag 33, 34. That *Shakespear* was the Man who of all *Modern*, and perhaps *Ancient Poets*, had the largett and most Comprehensive Soul. All the Images of *Nature* were still present to him, (*says Dryden*) and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes any thing, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted Learning, give him the greater Commendation: He was *Naturally* Learned; he needed not the Spectacles of Books to Read *Nature*; he look'd inwards, and found her there. I cannot (*says Dryden*) say, he is every where alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of Mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his *Comick* Wit degenerating into *Clenches*; his serious swelling into *Bombast*. But he is always great, when some great Occasion is presented to him: No Man can say he ever had a fit Subject for his Wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of *Poets*,

*Quantum lenta solent inter viburna Cupressi.*

The consideration of this (as *Dryden* observes) made *Mr. Hales* of *Eaton* say, That there was no Subject of  
D d 2 which

which any *Poet* ever Writ, but he would produce it better done in *Shakespear*; and however others are now generally preferr'd before him, yet the Age wherein he liv'd, which had Contemporaries with him, *Fletcher* and *Johnson*, never equal'd them to him in their esteem: And in the last Kings Court, when *Ben's* Reputation was at highest, *Sir John Suckling*, and with him the greater part of the *Courtiers*, set our *Shakespear* far above him.

*Dryden*, in his *Preface* to *Troilus* and *Cressida*, remarks, That the *English Tongue* in general is so much refin'd since *Shakespear's* time, that many of his *Words*, and more of his *Phrases*, are scarce intelligible. And of those which we do understand, some are ungrammatical, others coarse; and his whole Style (says *Dryden*) is so pester'd with *Figurative Expressions*, that it is as affected as it is obscure. 'Tis true, that in his *latter Plays* he had worn off somewhat of the Rust.

'Tis one of the Excellencies of *Shakespear*, says *Dryden*, in the said *Preface*, that the *Manners* of his Persons are generally apparent; and you see their bent and Inclinations. *Fletcher* comes far short of him in this, asindeed he does almost in every thing: There are but glimmerings of *Manners* in most of his *Comedies*, which run upon *Adventures*: And in his *Tragedies*, *Rollo*, *Otto*, the *King* and *No King*, *Melanti*us, and many others of his best, are but Pictures shown you in the *Twilight*; you know not whether they resemble *Vice*, or *Vertue*; and they are either *Good*, *Bad*, or *Indifferent*, as the present Scene requires it. But of all *Poets* (says *Dryden*) this Commendation is to be given to *Ben. Johnson*, that the *Manners* even of the most inconsiderable Persons in his *Plays* are every where apparent.

The Characters of *Fletcher* are poor and narrow, (says *Dryden*) in Comparison of *Shakespear's*; I remember not one which is not borrow'd from him; unless (says *Dryden*) you will except that strange mixture of a Man, in the *King* and *No King*: So that in this part *Shakespear* is generally worth our Imitation; and to imitate *Fletcher* (says *Dryden*) is but to Copy after him who was a Copyer. *Dryd. Ibid.*

If *Shakespear* were stript of all the Bombast in his Passions, and dress'd in the most Vulgar Words, we should still find the Beauties of his *Thoughts* remaining; if his Embroideries were burnt down, there would still be Silver at the bottom of the Melting-Pot. *Dryden. Ibid.*

*Tate*, who alter'd *Shakespear's Richard the Second*, tells us, There are some Master-Touches in this Play, that will vye with the best *Roman Poets*.

*All this together yet is but a part  
Of Dialogue, that great and powerful Art,  
Now almost lost, which the Old Grecians knew,  
From Whence the Romans fainter Copies drew, }  
Scarce comprehended since but by a Few.  
Plato and Lucian are the best Remains  
Of all the Wonders which this Art contains;  
Tet to our selves we justice must allow,  
Shakespear and Fletcher are the Wonders now:  
Consider them, and Read them o're and o're,  
Go see them Play'd, then Read them as before;  
For tho' in many things they grossly Fail,  
Over our Passions still they so prevail,  
That our own Grief by theirs is rock'd asleep,  
The Dull are forc'd to feel, the Wise to weep.*

**Vulgr.** Essay on Poetry.

How

How defective *Shakespear* has been in his *Plots*, *Rimer* has at large discover'd in his *Criticisms*.

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## Sir Philip Sidney,

SON to Sir *Henry Sidney*, thrice Lord Deputy of *Ireland*, and Sisters Son to *Robert Earl of Leicester*, was Born at *Penshurst* in the County of *Kent*, in the Year 1554. Bred at *Christ-Church* in *Oxford*. He was a Gentleman of great Accomplishments, and of a Sweet Nature. His Parts so endear'd him to *Queen Elizabeth*, that she sent him upon an Embassy to the Emperour of *Germany* at *Vienna*, which he discharg'd to his Honour, and her Approbation: Yea, his fame was so renown'd throughout all *Christendom*, that (as it is commonly reported) he was in Election for the Kingdom of *Poland*; though the Author of his *Life*, Printed before his *Arcadia*, doth doubt of the Truth of it. He was at last made Governor of *Flushing*. But most unfortunately, in the very prime of his Years, he was wounded with a Shot, in a small Skirmish before *Zutphen*, on the 22<sup>d</sup>. of *September*, 1586. of which he Died, on the 16<sup>th</sup>. of *October* following.

He Wrote a Famous Piece, call'd his *Arcadia*; as also *A Defence of Poesie*; and a Book Intituled *Astrophel and Stella*, with divers *Songs* and *Sonnets* in praise of his Lady, whom he Celebrated under that Bright Name. He also Translated part of that Excellent Treatise of *Philip Morney du Pleffis*, of the Truth of the *Christian Religion*.

Dr.

Dr. Fuller, in his *Worthies of England*, says, That Sir Philip Sidney was so Essential to the *English Court*, that it seem'd maim'd without his Company, being a Compleat Master of *Matter and Language*, as his *Arcadia* doth evidence.

Cambden, in his *History of Queen Elizabeth*, calls Sir Philip Sidney, A Person of great Virtue, Excellent Wit, most exquisite Learning, and one of a Sweet Temper.

The same Author, in his *Britannia*, says, That God therefore sent Sir Philip Sidney into the World, even to shew unto our Age a Sample of *Ancient Virtues*.

Grotius, in his *Annals of the Netherlands*, says, That the Battel at Zutphen prov'd fortunate enough to the *English*, had it not been sullied by the Death of Sir Philip Sidney, a Young Gentleman, Born with the greatest Advantages that could be; and who had honour'd the Nobility of his Birth, by the true Splendor of all Beautifying Learning.

Lipsius Dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney his Dialogue *De Rectâ Pronunciatione Latinæ Linguae*, and bath this Passage in his Epistle, *O Britannicæ tuæ clarum sidus, cui certatim lucem affundunt Virtus, Musa, Gratia, Fortuna*.

Speed, in his *Chronicle*, calls Sir Philip Sidney, That Worthy Gentleman, in whom were Compleat all Virtues and Valours, that could reside in Man.

Dr. Heylin, in his Description of *Greece*, says, That Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*; besides its Excellent Language, rare Contrivances, and Delectable Stories, hath in it all the Strains of *Poesse*, Comprehendeth the whole Art of Speaking; and to them who can discern and will observe, affordeth notable Rules for Demeanour, both private and publick.

Sir *William Temple*, in his *Essay of Poetry*, pag. 33. observes, That the true Spirit or Vein of *Ancient Poetry*, under the Name of *Romance*, seems to shine most in Sir *Philip Sidney*, whom, he says, he esteems both the greatest *Poet*, and the Noblest Genius of any that have left Writings behind them, and Publish'd in ours, or any other Modern Language; A Person Born Capable not only of Forming the greatest *Idea's*, but of Leaving the Noblest Examples, if the length of his Life had been equal to the Excellence of his Wit, and his Vertues.

*Edward Leigh*, in his *Treatise of Learning and Learned Men*, tells us, that the same thing may be said of Sir *Philip Sidney*, as *Austen* said of *Homer*, That he is very Sweet and Delightful even in his Vanities. Yet he was not so fond of his *Arcadia*, as the Bishop *Heliodorus* of his *Amorous Book*; for he desir'd when he Died (having first Consulted a Minister about it) to have had it suppress'd.

*Nat. Lee*, in his *Epistle Dedicatory to Philip Earl of Pembroke*, before *Cæsar Borgia*, says, That he Challenges all the Men of Fame to show an Equal to the Immortal *Sidney*, one who was so most Extravagantly Great, that he refus'd to be a *King*. He was at once a *Cæsar* and a *Virgil*, the *Leading Souldier*, and the *Formost Poet*.

'Tis generally reported, that Sir *Phillip Sidney*, in the extream Agony of his Wounds, earnestly desir'd an Intimate Friend of his, to Burn his *Arcadia*; but what Answer his Friend made, is uncertain: However this gave occasion for the ensuing *Epigram*:

*Ipse tuam moriens (sed Conjuge teste) jubebas  
Arcadium sævis ignibus esse Cibum:  
Si meruit mortem, quia Flammam accendit Amoris,  
Mergi, non Uri debuit iste Liber.*

*Inlibrum quæcunq; cadat Sententia: Nulla  
Debuit Ingenium morte perire tuum.*

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## Sophocles,

**A** Tragick Poet, Born at Athens the Second Year of the Seventy First Olympiad. He Died in the 95th. Year of his Age, Six Years after Euripides. He was called *The New Syren*, *The Flower of Poets*, and the *Bee*, from the sweetness of his Speech. He is said to have Written 120, or as others tell us, 123 Tragedies, of which Seven only are Extant, viz. *Ajax Flagellifer*, *Electra*, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Antigone*, *Trachiniæ*, *Philoctetes*, and *Oedipus Coloneus*. He is said to have been Victor Four and Twenty times. And as *Valerius Maximus* informs us, the last time he came off Victor, he so little expected it, that he died with the very Joy; but *Lucian* tells us, he was choak'd with a *Grape-Stone*. He added much to the perfecting Tragedy, in which he was far more exact, than either *Thespis* or *Eschylus*, that went before him. He increas'd the Number of the Chorus from Twelve to Fifteen. Hence therefore *Boileau* gives him this following Character:

*Then Sophocles, the Genius of his Age,  
Increas'd the Pomp, and Beauty of the Stage,  
Ingag'd the Chorus Song in every part,  
And Polish'd rugged Verse by Rules of Art:*

E e

He,

*He, in the Greek, did those Perfections gain,  
Which the weak Latin never could attain.*

**Boileau's Art of Poetry.**

*Cicero*, in *Catone Majore*, relates, That *Sophocles*, who liv'd to a very great Age, did to the very last continue his Writing *Tragedies*; which was the occasion of his Sons making their Complaint to the *Judges* against him; setting forth, that the good Old Man, their Father, did to wholly apply himself to this sort of Study, that he ne're minded the concerns of his Family; And therefore they Petition'd, that they would please to assign to him, as being *non Compos Mentis*, a Guardian to look after the Estate. But assoon as the *Old Gentleman* heard this, he Immediately produc'd his *Oedipus Coloneus*, (which he had Writ but a little before) reciting it to the *Judges*, and then ask'd them, whether they thought, a Man who had lost his Senses, could ever be the Author of the same? Whereupon the *Judges* presently dismiss the *Cause*, and sent away the *Sons* with a Flea in their Ears.

*Tully*, in his Second Book *De Divinatione*, calls *Sophocles*, A Divine Poet.

How great an esteem *Virgil* had for this Author, appears by his *Eglogue* 8. *verse* the 10th.

*Sola Sophocleo tua Carmina digna Cothurno.*

Whereby *Virgil* does in a particular manner distinguish *Sophocles* from all the other *Tragick Poets*.

*Rimer*, in his *Short View of Tragedy*, pag. 158. remarks, That at *Athens* (as it is reported) the *Tragedies* of *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*, were Enroll'd with their *Laws*, and made part of their *Statute-Book*.

*Longinus*,



*Longinus*, in his Book *περὶ ὑψηλῶς*, observes, That *Sophocles* had an excellent faculty, in giving the true and natural Description of things.

*Quintilian*, *lib. 10. cap. 1.* tells us, That *Sophocles* had wonderful skill in moving the Passions; and that his particular Talent lay, in exciting Compassion.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in *Scaligerana 2.* calls *Sophocles* an Admirable Author; he says, he is the most considerable of all the Greek Poets; and, for the most part, beyond *Virgil* too. He styles the *Philoctetes*, a Divine Tragedy; and seems as it were astonish'd, that *Sophocles* could speak so many fine things upon such a Barren Subject. And he also cries up his *Oedipus Tyrannus*, as a most Beautiful Piece. To Conclude, he tells us, Whoever has Read *Sophocles* well, is no small Proficient in the Greek Tongue; and that it is a Thousand pities, we have lost so many of his most Excellent Tragedies.

*Vossius*, in the Second Book of his *Institutiones Poeticæ*, *pag. 75.* tells us, That the Style of *Sophocles* is not only Sublime, Lofty, and Magnificent, but also Pure and Correct.

The same Author, in the same Book, *pag. 53.* says, That *Sophocles* transcends *Euripides* in High, Majestick Expressions; but, that *Euripides* excels him in neatness and compactness of Style.

*Borrichius*, in his *Dissert. Acad. De Poetis*, *pag. 30.* observes, That *Sophocles*, by his Style, seems to be rather a Man for business, than for words; whereas the Style of *Euripides*, favours more of the Scholar, and the Orator.

*Rapin*, in the Second Part of his *Reflex. on Arist. of Poësie*, *sect. xxii.* takes notice, That *Sophocles* is too elaborate in his Discourse; that his Art is not hid enough in some of his Pieces, it lies too open, and too near the light; that he sometimes becomes Obscure, by his too great affecta-

tion to be Sublime; and the Nobleness of his Expression, is injurious to the perspicuity; His *Plots*, says *Rapin*, are not all so happily *unravell'd*, as that of the *Oedipus*. The *Discovery* in the *Ajax* answers not to the *Intrigue*; the *Author* ought not to have ended a Spectacle of that Terror and Pity, with a dull and frivolous Contest about the *Sepulture* of *Ajax*, who then had Slain himself. And in the *same Piece*, says *Rapin*, that *Machin* of *Minerva* is too violent, who casts an Enchantment over the Eyes of *Ajax*, to save *Ulysses*, whom *Ajax* would have kill'd, if he had known him. *Oedipus*, says *Rapin*, ought not to have been ignorant of the *Assassinat* of the King of *Thebes*; the ignorance he is in of the *Murder*, which makes all the Beauty of the *Intreague*, is not *probable*.

*Dryden*, in the *Preface* to his *Oedipus*, says, That *Oedipus* was the most Celebrated Piece of all Antiquity; that *Sophocles*, not only the greatest Wit, but one of the greatest Men in *Athens*, made it for the *Stage* at the Publick Cost, and that it had the Reputation of being his *Master-Piece*, not only amongst the Seven of his which are still remaining, but of the greater Number which are Perish'd.

*Aristotle* has more than once admir'd it in his Book of *Poetry*.

*Jacobus Thomafus*, in his *De Plagio Literario*, tells us, That *Sophocles* was so great a *Plagiary*, that *Philostratus* of *Alexandria* Wrote a Piece on purpose, to shew from what Authors he had stole.

## Edmund Spencer,

A Famous *English* Poet, born in the City of *London*, and brought up in *Pembroke-Hall* in *Cambridge*; He flourish'd in the Reign of *Queen Elizabeth*. His great Friend was *Sir Philip Sidney*, by whose means he was preferr'd to be *Secretary* to his Brother *Sir Henry Sidney*, who was sent *Deputy* into *Ireland*, where he is said to have written his *Fairy-Queen*; but upon the return of *Sir Henry*, his Employment ceasing, he also return'd into *England*, and having lost his great Friend *Sir Philip*, fell into Poverty; whereupon he addrest himself to *Queen Elizabeth*, presenting her with a Poem, with which she was so well pleas'd, that he had order'd him 500 *l.* for his support, which nevertheless was abridg'd to One Hundred Pounds by the Lord Treasurer *Cecil*, who hearing of it, and owing him a grudge for some Reflections in *Mother Hubbard's Tale*, cry'd out to the Queen, *What all this for a Song?* This he is said to have taken so much to Heart, that he contracted a deep Melancholy, which soon after brought his life to a Period, *Anno Dom.* 1598.

*Edward Phillips*, in his *Theatrum Poetarum*, says, That *Spencer* was the first of our *English* Poets that brought *Heroick Poesie* to any perfection; his *Fairy-Queen* being for great Invention and Poetick Heighth, judg'd little Inferiour, if not Equal to the Chief of the Ancient *Greeks* and *Latins*, or Modern *Italians*; But the first Poem that brought him into Esteem, was his *Shepherds Kalendar*. This Piece was highly admir'd by *Sir Philip Sidney*.

*Cambden,*

*Cambden*, in his *History of Queen Elizabeth*, says, That *Edmund Spencer* was a *Londoner* by Birth, and a Scholar also of the *University of Cambridge*, born under so favourable an Aspect of the *Muses*, that he surpass'd all the *English Poets* of former Times, not excepting *Chaucer* himself, his Fellow-Citizen. But by a *Fate* which still follows *Poets*, he always wrestled with *Poverty*.

*Dr. Fuller*, in his *Worthies of England*, affirms, That *Edmund Spencer* was an Excellent Linguist, Antiquary, Philosopher, and Mathematician; yet so poor (as being a *Poet*) that he was thought *Famem non Famæ scribere*.

*Sir William Temple*, in his *Essay of Poetry*, pag. 46, 47. remarks, That the *Religion* of the *Gentiles*, had been woven into the *Contexture* of all the *Ancient Poetry*, with a very agreeable Mixture; which made the *Moderns* affect, to give that of *Christianity* a place also in their Poems. But the *true Religion*, was not found to become *Fiction* so well, as a *False* had done, and all their Attempts of this Kind, seem'd rather to debase *Religion*, than to heighten *Poetry*. *Spencer*, says *Temple*, endeavour'd to supply this with *Morality*, and to make *Instruction*, instead of *Story*, the Subject of an *Epick Poem*. His Execution was Excellent, and his Flights of Fancy very Noble and High, but his Design was poor, and his *Moral* lay so bare, that it lost the Effect; 'tis true, says *Temple*, the Pill was Gilded, but so thin, that the Colour and the Taste were too easily discover'd.

*Rimer*, in the *Preface* to his Translation of *Rapin's Reflexions on Aristotle of Poesie*, tells us, That in his Judgment, *Spencer* may be reckon'd the first of our *Heroick Poets*; He had a large Spirit, a sharp Judgment, and a *Genius* for *Heroick Poesie*, perhaps above any that ever writ since *Virgil*. But our Misfortune is, says *Rimer*,

mer, he wanted a true *Idea*; and lost himself, by following an unfaithful Guide. Though besides *Homer* and *Virgil* he had read *Tasso*, yet he rather suffer'd himself to be misled by *Ariosto*; with whom blindly rambling on *marvellous Adventures*, he makes no Conscience of *Probability*. All is Fanciful and Chimerical, without any Uniformity, or without any foundation in Truth; in a Word, his Poem (says *Rimer*) is perfect *Fairy-Land*.

*Dryden*, in his *Dedication* to the Earl of *Dorset* before the Translation of *Juvenal*, pag. viii. says, That the *English* have only to boast of *Spencer* and *Milton*, in *Heroick Poetry*; who neither of them wanted either *Genius*, or *Learning*, to have been perfect *Poets*; and yet both of them are liable to many Censures. For there is no *Uniformity* in the Design of *Spencer*: He aims at the Accomplishment of no one Action: He raises up a *Hero* for every one of his Adventures; and endows each of them with some particular *Moral Virtue*, which renders them all equal, without Subordination or Preference. Every one is most valiant in his own *Legend*; only (says *Dryden*) we must do him that justice, to observe, that *Magnanimity*, which is the Character of Prince *Arthur*, shines throughout the whole Poem; and Succours the rest, when they are in distress. The Original of every Knight, was then living in the Court of Queen *Elizabeth*: And he attributed to each of them that Virtue, which he thought was most conspicuous in them: An Ingenious piece of flattery, tho' it turn'd not much to his Account. Had he liv'd to finish his Poem, in the six remaining *Legends*, it had certainly been more of a piece; but cou'd not have been perfect, because the *Model* was not true. But Prince *Arthur*, or his chief Patron, Sir *Philip Sidney*, whom he intended to make happy,

happy, by the Marriage of his *Gloriana*, dying before him, depriv'd the Poet, both of Means and Spirit, to accomplish his Design: For the rest, his *Obsolete Language*, and the *ill Choice* of his *Stanza*, are faults but of the Second Magnitude: For notwithstanding the *first* he is still Intelligible, at least, after a little practice; And for the *last*, he is the more to be admir'd; that labouring under such a difficulty, his Verses are so Numerous, so Various, and so Harmonious, that only *Virgil*, whom he has profestly imitated, has surpass'd him, among the *Romans*; And only Mr. *Waller* among the *English*, says *Dryden*.

The Expence of his Funeral and Monument was defray'd at the sole charge of *Robert*, first of that Name, Earl of *Effex*. He lies buried in *Westminster-Abbey*, near *Chaucer*, with this *Epitaph*:

Edmundus Spencer, *Londinensis*, *Anglicorum Poetarum nostri seculi fuit Princeps*, quod ejus Poemata, faventibus Musis, & victuro genio conscripta comprobant. Obiit immaturâ morte, Anno Salutis, 1598. & prope Galfredum Chaucerum conditur, qui sælicissimè Poësin Anglicis literis primus illustravit. In quem hæc Scripta sunt Epitaphia.

*Hic prope Chaucerum situs est Spenserius, illi  
Proximus Ingenio, proximus ut Tumulo.  
Hic prope Chaucerum Spensere poeta poetam  
Conderis, & versu! quam tumulo propior.  
Anglica te vivo vixit, plaussitque Poësis;  
Nunc moritura timet, te moriente, mori.*

## Publius Papinius Statius,

A Neopolitan, who flourish'd under Domitian, though by some confounded with *Statius Surculus* the great Rhetorician of *Tholouse*, in the time of Nero.

There are of his Writings extant, his *Thebais*, his *Achilleis*, and his *Sylvæ*.

*Vossius*, in his *De Poetis Latinis*, observes, That it is very remarkable, that *Martial*, who was a great admirer of *Stella* the Poet, should never make any mention of *Statius*, who was so intimate with *Stella*, that he Dedicated to him the first Book of his *Sylvæ*. But *Vossius* supposes, this might proceed from Envy and Emulation in *Martial*; who could not brook it, that *Papinius* should be so much in *Domitian's* favour, on the account of his having so good a Knack in making *Ex-tempore-Verses*; wherein, as *Vossius* tells us, he far excell'd *Martial*.

*Julius Scaliger*, in his Sixth Book *De Poeticâ*, pag. 843, 844. calls *Statius* a most polite, and a most ingenious Poet. He says, there are none either of the Ancient or Modern Poets, that did tread so near to the heels of *Virgil*; and that he had come nearer him, if he had not affect'd to follow him too close. For being in his own nature high and lofty, whenever he endeavour'd to excel, and exert himself, he presently fell into Expressions, that were too haughty and swelling. But beyond all dispute, unless it be that *Phoenix* of the Age, *Virgil*, there are none else of the Heroick Poets, says *Scaliger*, whether Greek or Latin, that can be compar'd

to this *our Author*; whose Verses are to be preferr'd before those of *Homer*.

*Stephanus Claverius*, in his Notes upon *Claudian*, stiles him, The Noble and Generous *Statius*, and one of an admirable quick Wit.

*Isaac Casaubon*, in his Comment upon *Suetonius* of *Domitian*, calls *Statius*, An Excellent Poet.

*Turnebus*, in the Twenty Sixth Book of his *Adversaria*, cap. 23. says, That *Papinius* was a very good Poet.

*Mich. de Marolles*, in the Preface to his *French Translation* of *Statius*, complains, That the Works of *this Author*, are not so much valued as they ought to be; since, as he declares, unless it be *Virgil*, he knows none that surpasses him.

*Hugo Grotius*, in a Letter to *Gronovius*, dated at *Paris*, Decemb. x. 1637. says, He always had a great esteem for *Papinius*, whom he reckon'd not much inferior to *Virgil* for all sorts of Learning; nay, even in Poetry, says *Grotius*, take him in some respects, (if the *Criticks* will pardon me for saying so) he is not much behind him, if any thing at all.

*Justus Lipsius*, in the first Century of *Epistles*, *Epist.* 13. calls *Papinius*, A sublime and lofty Poet; who, whatever others may think, was, in his Opinion, neither haughty, nor affected in his Style.

*Borrichius*, *de Poetis*, pag. 62. tells us, That *Statius*, the Favourite of *Domitian*, had wrote several things, in a learned and lofty Style; but, that many of them were lost, and among others, that famous Tragedy of his, the *Agave*, which by reason of his Poverty he was fain to sell to *Paris*, that he might Publish it as his own. We have now extant his *Sylvæ*, in five Books; his *Thebais*,



*bais*, in Twelve Books; and his *Achilleis*, in two. In all which several Pieces, says *Borrichius*, his Style generally appears to be florid, Choice, and Magnificent; yet in his *Sylva*, the Style is purer, and more natural; in his *Thebais*, fuller of Art; and in his *Achilleis*, it is more uneven. Hence therefore, some of the *Criticks* declare, That it is with *Statius* among the *Poets*, as it was with *Alexander* the Great among the *Heroes*, viz. that his great *Virtues* were mix'd with great *Vices*; And that sometimes his Verse runs in a truly lofty, majestic Strain; and sometimes he mounts above the Clouds in a high, bombastick Style; and then again, *Icarus* like, he falls from the greatest heighth, down to the very ground. And therefore *Famianus Strada* very properly supposes *Statius*, to be seated upon the very highest part of *Parnassus's* Hill, and in so much danger, that he seems to be like a Man, who is just ready to fall.

*Rapin*, in the first part of his *Reflex.* on *Aristotle's* Book of *Poesie*, *sect.* 18. says, That those who place the *Essence* of *Poetry* in big and pompous words, as *Statius* among the *Latins*, and *Du Bartas* among the *French*, are much mistaken in their account, when they aspire to the Glory of *Poetry* by such feeble means.

The same Author, *sect.* 30. remarks, That *Statius*, by an Affectation of great Words, and swelling Expressions, fills the *Ears*, without ever touching the *Heart*.

He further observes, in the Second part of those *Reflexions*, *sect.* xv. That *Statius* is as fantastical in his *Idea's*, as in his *Expressions*; and that his Two Poems, the *Thebais* and *Achilleis*, have nothing in them regular, all is vast and disproportionable.

*Dryden*, in his *Apology* for *Heroick Poetry*, observes to us, That *Lucan* and *Statius* were Men of an un-

bounded Imagination, but who often wanted the Poize of Judgment.

The same Author, in his *Dedication* to the Earl of Dorset before the *Translat.* of *Juvenal*, pag. vii. calls *Starrus*, The best Versificator next to *Virgil*; but yet he says, He knew not how to *Design* after him, tho' he had the *Model* in his Eye.

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## Sir John Suckling,

WAS born at *Witham* in the County of *Middlesex*, in the Year 1613. and which was Extraordinary, in the beginning of the Eleventh Month, according to his Mother's Reckoning. Nor was his Life less remarkable, than his Birth: For he had so pregnant a Genius, that he spoke *Latin* at Five Years Old, and writ it at Nine Years of Age. His incomparable Parts made him much taken notice of in the Reign of King *Charles* the First, to whom he was *Comptroller*. His Skill in *Languages*, and *Musick*, was remarkable; but above all his *Poetry*, says *Langbaine*, took with all the People, whose Souls were polish'd by the Charms of the *Muses*.

This Ingenious Gentleman died of a Feaver, being about 29 Years of Age.

Besides his *Poems*, he wrote three *Plays*, the *Goblins*, a *Tragi-Comedy*; *Brennoralt*, a *Tragedy*; and *Aglaura*, a *Tragi-Comedy*.

*Winstanley*,

*Winstanley* says, That Sir *John Suckling*, in his time, the Delight of the Court, and Darling of the Muses; was one so fill'd with *Phæbean* Fire, as for Excellency of Wit, was worthy to be Crown'd with a Wreath of Stars; though some Attribute the strength of his Lines to favour more of the *Grape* than the *Lamp*. Indeed he made *Poetry* his Recreation, not his Study; and did not so much seek Fame, as it was put upon him. In my mind, says *Winstanley*, he gives the best Character of himself, in those Verses of his in the *Sessions of the Poets*:

*Suckling next was call'd, but did not appear,  
But straight one whisper'd Apollo i'th' ear,  
That of all Men living he car'd not for't,  
He lov'd not the Mules so well as his Sport:*

*And prized black Eyes, or a lucky hit  
At Bowles, above all the Trophies of Wit.  
But Apollo was angry, and publicly said,  
'Twere fit that a Fine were set upon's head.*

*Phillips*, in his *Theatrum Poetarum*, calls Sir *John Suckling*, A Witty and Elegant Courtier; whose Works, Entitled *Fragmenta Aurea*, have a pretty touch of a Gentile Spirit, and seem to savour more of the *Grape*, than the *Lamp*, and still keep up their Reputation equal with any Writ so long ago.

*Lloyd*, in his *Memoirs*, pag. 159: gives this Character of Sir *John Suckling*, That He had the strange happiness to make whatsoever he did, become him. His *Poems* being clean, sprightly, and Natural; his *Discourses*, Full and Convincing; his *Plays*, Well-humour'd  
and

and Taking; his *Letters*, Fragrant and Sparkling; only his *Thoughts* were not so loose as his *Expression*, witness his Excellent Discourse to my Lord of Dorset about Religion.

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## Torquato Tasso,

THE Chief of *Italian Heroick Poets*, the Son of *Bernardo Tasso*, and *Portia de Rubeis*; He was born at *Sorrento*, an Ancient City of *Italy*, about 18 Miles from *Naples*, on the tenth of *April*, 1544. He died at *Rome* on the twenty seventh of *March*, 1595.

His chief Poems are, *Gierusalemme Liberata*; *Gierusalemme Conquistata*; *Rinaldo*; *Torismondo*, a Tragedy; *le Sette Giornate del Mondo creato*; and *Amintas*, a Pastoral.

*Baillet*, in the *Jugemens des Sçavans*, tells us, That about the latter End of the last Century, and the beginning of this, it was with great heat disputed among the *Italians*, which was to have the Preference, *Tasso* or *Ariosto*; but (*says he*) now, this Controversie is at an End; And, in spight of the Academy *La Crusca*, and of some others who are less Considerable, *Tasso* does at this day carry it not only from *Ariosto*, but likewise from all the Rest of the *Italian Poets*; And, says *Baillet*, this great Reputation *Tasso* acquir'd not by favour, but by merit.

*Thuanus*, in his History of the Year 1595, calls *Tasso*, A Man of an Admirable, and Prodigious Wit; who, as  
*Thuanus*

*Thuanus* says, from his Youth was troubled with a sort of *Frenzy*, that was incurable; but yet, in his *lucid Intervals*, he Wrote a great many things both in *Prose* and *Verse*, with so much Judgment, Elegancy, and Politeness of Style, that the Compassion Men had for his Misfortune, was at last turn'd into wonder and astonishment: For whereas other Men, who have this distemper, are generally disorder'd in their *Intellectuals*, one way or other; it had a quite contrary effect upon him; for hereby his Wit was render'd more Pure and Volatile; his Fancy and Imagination became more quick and ready; so that he could with greater ease, make use of his Inventive Faculty; and he also manag'd his Subject with the greater judgment, and exactness: And, to conclude, this *Frenzy* of his, furnish'd him with Nobler Thoughts and *Ideas*, as also with more Masculine and Choice Expressions. But what was still more Wonderful and Surprising, was, that *Tasso*, immediately after he came out of one of these *Fits*, would Compose his *Verses* with the greatest Sedateness of Mind, that could be; and to such a degree of excellence, that scarce any Man, of the greatest Parts, though he had never so much Leisure, could have transcended; so that instead of taking *Tasso* for one who had lost his Senses, we might rather (says *Thuanus*) have lookt on him, as a Man *Divinely Inspir'd*.

*Anthony Theissier*, in his Additions of the *Elogies* made by *Thuanus*, says, That *Tasso* at 18 Years of Age, Compos'd that Excellent Poem of his, the *Rinaldo*, the first Fruit of his Admirable Genius, and which gain'd him the esteem of all such, as had any delicacy of Taste for things of this Nature. Indeed, what *Longinus* said of the *Odyssees*, That it was the Work of an Old Man, but, that this

Old

Old Man was *Homer*; The same may we say with the famous *M. Menage*, That *Rinaldo* is the Work of a Young Man, but, that this Young Man was *Torquato Tasso*.

*Teissier* also informs us, That *Tasso* was but 22 Years Old, when he begun his *Gierusalemme Liberata*, that Incomparable Poem, the most accomplish'd Piece that has been since the Age of *Augustus*, in the opinion of the most Judicious *Criticks*, and especially of *M. de Balzac*, who affirm'd, with a great deal of Eloquence and Reason, That as *Virgil* is the cause of *Tasso's* not having the first Place among the *Epic Poets*, so *Tasso* is the cause that *Virgil* is not the only *Epic Poet*. But yet, says *Teissier*, as there is nothing in this World absolutely Perfect, so there are some things in this Poem, as his Description of the Palace of *Armida*, and some other Particular things, which he mingles with his Narrations, that have somewhat both Childish and Impertinent in them, which seems by no means agreeable to the Gravity of an *Epic Poem*, where every thing ought to be Great and Majestick. And *Teissier* further observes, That *Tasso* in this Poem, does not always keep up the Dignity of his Character, in Discourses of Passion and Gallantry; and many other Defects *Teissier* takes notice of. But it seems, *Tasso* himself was sufficiently sensible of the several Imperfections of this Poem, which caus'd him to Write another upon the same Subject, which he call'd *Gierusalemme Conquistata*.

*Teissier* says, There are some, who look upon his *Amin-tas* to be his chief Master-Piece; nay, and they tell us, That *Tasso* himself was of that Opinion, and that he valu'd this *Comedy* above all his other Pieces of Poetry; as he thought his *Tragedy*, Intituled *Torismondo*, to be the worst. But however it be, says *Teissier*, this is certain,  
that

that the *Amintas* hath been imitated by the best of the *Italian* Poets, and especially by the *Chevalier Guarini*, and by the Count *Guidabaldo Bonacelli*, and that *Pastor Fido* and the *Filli di Sciro*, are but Copies of that excellent Piece. And for this reason, *Boccalin* in his *Parnassus* feign'd, That the *Italian* Poets having broke open *Tasso's* private Desk, where he kept his choicest Compositions, stole away his *Amintas*, which they divided amongst themselves; and that it might not be discover'd, they fled to the *Palace of Imitation*, as to a Secure Sanctuary.

*Rapin*, in the first part of his *Reflexions* on *Aristotle* of *Poesie*, sect. 19. remarks, That the most perfect Design of all *Modern Poems*, is that of *Tasso*, nothing more Compleat has appear'd in *Italy*, though great faults are in the Conduct of it. And in the *Second Part*, sect. xiii. he enumerates several of the Faults; as his mixing in his Poem the light Character with the serious, and all the force and Majesty of *Heroick*, with the Softness and Delicacy of the *Eglogue* and *Lyrick Poesie*. For the *Shepherds* adventures with *Herminia* in the *Seventh Canto*, and the Letters of her *Lovers Name*, which she Carv'd on the Bark of *Bays* and *Beeches*; the Moan she made to the *Trees* and *Roeks*; the *Purling Streams*, the *Embroider'd Meadows*; the *Singing of Birds*, in which the Poet himself took so much pleasure; the *Enchanted Wood* in the *Thirteenth Canto*; the *Songs of Armida* in the *Fourteenth* to inspire *Rinaldo* with Love, the *Caresses* this Sorceress made him, the *Description* of her *Palace*, where nothing is breath'd but Softness and Effeminacy, and those other affected Descriptions, have nothing of that Grave and Majestick Character, which is proper for *Heroick Verse*.

*Dryden*, in his *Dedication* to the Earl of *Dorset* before the Translation of *Juvenal*, observes, That *Tasso*, whose *Design* was Regular, and who observ'd the Rules of *Unity* in *Time* and *Place*, more closely than *Virgil*, yet was not so happy in his *Action*; he confesses himself to have been too *Lyrical*, that is, to have Written beneath the Dignity of *Heroick Verse*, in his *Episodes* of *Sophronia*, *Erminia*, and *Armida*; his Story is not so pleasing as *Ariosto's*; he is too flatulent sometimes, and sometimes too dry; many times unequal, and almost always forc'd; and besides, is full of *Conceits*, *Points* of *Epigram* and *Witticisms*; all which are not only below the Dignity of *Heroick Verse*, but contrary to its Nature, says *Dryden*.

The same Author, in the *Preface* to his *Mock-Astrologer*, tells us, That *Tasso*, the most Excellent of *Modern Poets*, and whom he reverences next to *Virgil*, has taken both from *Homer* many admirable things which are left untouch'd by *Virgil*, and from *Virgil* himself where *Homer* cou'd not furnish him.

*Sir William Temple*, in his *Essay of Poetry*, pag. 46. says, That *Ariosto* and *Tasso*, enter'd boldly upon the Scene of *Heroick Poems*; but having not Wings for so high Flights, began to learn of the Old Ones, fell upon their Imitations, and Chiefly of *Virgil*, as far as the Force of their *Genius*, or Disadvantage of New Languages and Customs would allow.



## Publius Terentius,

**A** Comical Poet, Born at Carthage; who at Rome serving *Terentius Lucanus*, by his means got acquaintance with *Caius Lælius*, and *Scipio Africanus*; by whom (it was suppos'd) he was assisted in writing his Plays.

Nor do *Valgius* and *Memmius* stick to affirm, That some *Comedies* which go under the Name of *Terence* were entirely *Scipio's*. He was also a great Imitator of *Menander*, whom he owns to have follow'd in many of his *Comedies* almost Word for Word.

There are extant, Six of *Terence's Comedies*.

*Daniel Heinsius*, in his *Dissertatio* before *Terence*, says, That the pleasantness, as also the Elegancy, Judgment, and Beauty, which is to be found in *this Author*, is admirable, and hardly to be express'd. Of the Graces and Beauty of which *Author*, as *Joseph Scaliger* once said, not one Scholar of a Hundred is a Competent Judge.

*Erasmus*, in the 28th. Book of his *Epistles*, *Epist.* 20. tells us, There is no Author, from whom we can better Learn the pure *Roman Style*, than from *Terence*; and that there is more exact Judgment in one *Comedy* of *Terence*, than in the several *Comedies* of *Plautus*, put 'em all together.

*Jacobus Crucius*, in the Third Book of his *Epistles*, in an *Epist.* to *Francis Leeuvius*, informs us, That *Joseph Scaliger*, when he was an Old Man, and after he had run through almost all the *Arts* and *Sciences*, was so great an Admirer of *Terence*, that he seldom had him out of his Hand; And that he was never cloy'd with Reading this Incomparable Author.

*Julius Scaliger*, in his Sixth Book *De Poeticâ*, pag. 766. remarks, That *Terence* did so much affect Purity of Style, that he at any time had rather shew a Roughness in his Temper, than in his Expressions; And that as *Plautus* was for accommodating Words to Things; so *Terence* chose rather to suit Things to Words.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in *Scaligerana* 1. calls *Plautus* and *Terence*, the best and choicest of all the Latin Authors; and says that their Style is to be us'd before any other.

*Vossius*, in the Fourth Book of his *Institutiones Oratoriæ*, pag. 25. immediately after *Cicero*, gives the next Place to *Cæsar* and *Terence*, for a true, proper Roman Style.

*Borrichius*, in his *De Poetis*, pag. 44. wishes, that *Terence* had employ'd his Talent upon some better Subject, every thing in him being so neat, so proper, and so pure; he is modest even in his Metaphors, nor are his Jestis idle, or abusive.

*Lipsius*, in the Second Book of his *Epistolice Quæstiones*, *Epist.* 18. observes, That *Plautus* is often so obscene in his Jestis, and so Loose and Immoral, that he is scarce fit for a Sober Man to Read; But, that *Terence* is every where so Modest, so Chaste, and so Bashful, that even a Vestal need not be afraid of his Company.

*Vossius*, in the Second Book of his *Institutiones Poeticæ*, pag. 125. tells us, *Plautus* deserv'd not so much Commendation as *Terence*; in that his Aim and Design was, to please the People in General, without making any distinction; whereas all that *Terence* desir'd, was, to gain the Approbation of Some Few, who were Men of the best Reputation.

Monfieur

Monsieur *Hedelin*, Abbot of *Aubignac*, in his 3<sup>d</sup>. Book of *The Art of the Stage*, chap. 2. remarks, That *Terence* is pleasanter to read than *Plautus*, because he is more Elegant; but *Plautus* took better with the *Romans*, because he is fuller of Action. *Terence* has many serious *Moral* Sayings, which is not the proper Work of *Comedy*, where the Spectators Design is to laugh. But *Plautus*, says *Hedelin*, is full of *Intrigues*, from which many Jest, and Ingenious *Railleries* are created, and that's the Thing we wish for in *Comedy*.

*Rapin*, in the 2<sup>d</sup>. part of his *Reflexions on Aristotle of Poesie*, sect. 26 observes, That *Terence's* Plots are more naturally unravell'd, than those of *Plautus*; as those of *Plautus* are more natural than those of *Aristophanes*. And though *Cæsar* call *Terence* a *Diminutive Menander*, because he only had the Sweetness and the Smoothness, but had not the force and vigor, yet (says *Rapin*) he has writ in a manner so natural, and so judicious, that of a Copy, as he was, he is become an *Original*; for never Man had so clear an insight into *Nature*.

*St. Euremont*, in his *Miscellaneous Essays*, in his Judgment upon *Seneca*, takes notice, that *Terence* is generally said, to be the best of all the Ancient Authors, for hitting the Humours and Tempers of Men: But, says *St. Euremont*, there is this Objection to him, That he has not *Extent* enough; and his whole *Talent* goes no further, than to give a true, and natural Representation of a *Servant*, an *Old Man*, a *Covetous Father*, a *Debauch'd Son*, or a *Slave*. This is the utmost of what *Terence* can do. You are not to expect from him, any thing of *Gallantry*, or *Passion*, or of the Thoughts, or Discourse of a *Gentleman*.

*Quintilian* says, That *Terence's* Writings were the most Elegant of the Kind; but, that they would yet have been more beautiful, if the *Verse* had been the *Iambick* of Six Feet. But some of the *Modern Criticks* have taken great offence at this Exception of *Quintilian*; and among the rest, *Boeclerus* says, that *Georg. Fabricius* had reason to confute *Quintilian* in this particular.

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## *Theocritus,*

A *Sicilian* Poet, of *Syracuse*; he flourish'd in the 123d. *Olympiad*, in the time of *Ptolemæus Philadelphus*. He was put to Death by the Command of *Hiero* the Tyrant, for having made some Reflexions on him.

He wrote *Bucolicks* in the *Dorick* Dialect, which *Virgil* in his *Bucolicks* imitates.

Although *Theocritus* was not the first Inventer of the *Bucolick* Verse, yet he is allow'd to be the first that brought it to perfection. Hence therefore it is, that either his Name, or that of his Country, is sometimes apply'd, by way of *Epithet*, to this kind of Verse, as it appears by the Example of *Virgil*:

*Prima Syracusio dignata est ludere Versu  
Nostra, nec erubuit sylvas habitare Thaleia.* Virg. Eclog. 6.

*Quintilian*, in his Tenth Book, chap. 1. says, That *Theocritus* is admirable in his Kind; but, that his Muse is clownish, and is afraid of the Court and City.

*Daniel*

*Daniel Heinfius*, in his Edition of *Theocritus*, calls him the chief of *Bucolick* Writers, an Author whose Graces and Beauty no one sufficiently comprehends.

*Borrichius*, in his *De Poetis*, pag. 12. affirms, That *Theocritus's* Style, to such as thoroughly understand it, seems to be natural, easie, and sweet, and in its Kind admirable; that *Virgil* lik'd it so well, that in his *Bucolicks* he propos'd it for his imitation; but, that he did not always arrive at the extraordinary sweetness of *Theocritus*.

*Rapin*, in the 2<sup>d</sup>. part of his *Reflexions* on *Aristotle* of *Poesie*, sect. 27. says, That the *Models* to be propos'd to write well in the *Eglogue* or *Bucolick*, are *Theocritus* and *Virgil*. He says, *Theocritus* is more sweet, more natural, and more delicate, by the Character of the *Greek Tongue*. *Virgil* is more judicious, more exact, more regular, and more modest, by the Character of his own *Wit*, and by the *Genius* of the *Latin Tongue*. *Theocritus* has more of all the Graces that make the ordinary Beauty of *Poetry*; *Virgil* has more of good *Sense*, more vigor, more nobleness, more modesty. After all, says *Rapin*, *Theocritus* is the *Original*, *Virgil* is only the *Copy*: Though some things he hath *Copied* so happily, that they equal the *Original* in many places.

*Dryden*, in his *Preface* to *Sylvæ*, or the Second Part of *Poetical Miscellanies*, observes, That that which distinguishes *Theocritus* from all other *Poets*, both *Greek* and *Latin*, and which raises him even above *Virgil* in his *Eclogues*, is the inimitable tenderness of his *Passions*; and the natural Expression of them in Words so becoming of a *Pastoral*. A Simplicity shines through all he writes: He shows his Art and Learning by disguising both. His *Shepherds* never rise above their Country Education in their Complaints of *Love*: There is the  
same

same difference betwixt *Him* and *Virgil*, as there is betwixt *Tasso's Aminta*, and the *Pastor Fido* of *Guarini*. *Virgil's Shepherds* are too well read in the Philosophy of *Epicurus*, and of *Plato*; and *Guarini's* seem to have been bred in *Courts*. But *Theocritus* and *Tasso*, have taken theirs from *Cottages* and *Plains*. It was said of *Tasso*, in relation to his Similitudes, *Mai esce del Bosco*: That he never departed from the *Woods*, that is, all his *Comparisons* were taken from the *Country*: The same, *Dryden* observes, may be said of our *Theocritus*; he is softer than *Ovid*, he touches the *Passions* more delicately; and performs all this out of his own *Fond*, without diving into the Arts and Sciences for a supply. Even his *Dorick Dialect* has an incomparable Sweetness in its *Clownishness*, like a fair *Shepherdess* in her *Countrey Russet*, talking in a *Torkshire Tone*. This (says *Dryden*) was impossible for *Virgil* to imitate; because the severity of the *Roman Language* denied him that advantage. *Spencer* has endeavour'd it in his *Shepherds Calendar*; but neither will it succeed in *English*, for which reason, *Dryden* says, he forbore to attempt it.

*Tanneguy le Fevre*, in his *Abridgment* of the *Lives* of the *Greek Poets*, remarks, That the *Dorick Dialect* which *Theocritus* uses, is much sweeter than the Language of the first *Doricks*. He says, whoever will but examine the Character of this Poet, will find him very easie and natural: And, that *this Author* has the same advantage over *Virgil* in *Bucolicks*, as the *Greek Language* has over the *Latin* in that respect.

*Albius Tibullus,*

**A** Roman Knight, Born in the same Year with *Ovid*, being in the Second Year of the 184<sup>th</sup>. *Olympiad*. He flourish'd about 18 Years before *Christ*. He was very intimate with *Horace* and *Ovid*. What Estate he had, he consum'd, being one of an Amorous Complexion.

He was Famous for his *Elegies*; Four Books whereof he Compos'd, which were commonly Printed with *Catullus*.

*Petrus Crinitus*, in his *De Poetis Latinis*, says, That *Tibullus* went beyond all the *Latin Poets* for expressing the Passions; as also for Elegance, and sweetness of Temper.

*Quintilian*, in his Tenth Book, cap. 1. thought *Tibullus*, for *Elegy*, to be the most pure and Elegant of all the *Poets*: though, as he tells us, some prefer'd *Propertius* before him.

*Rolandus Marefius*, in his Second Book of *Epistles*, *Epist. 6.* tells us, That, though it may be thought a Piece of Confidence in him, to contradict so great a Critick as *Quintilian*, who seems to prefer *Tibullus*; yet, for my part, says *Marefius*, I own, I am one of those, who give the preference to *Propertius*. For although *Tibullus* be wonderfully Pleasant and Elegant, and much more Correct in the *Latin Tongue* than the other (who often imitates the *Greek Poets*) and is also more curious and exact in his Verse; yet *Propertius* seems to surpass him in Learning, and in sweetness of Temper. But, as *Marefius* observes, though *Propertius* was of such an Excellent Sedate Temper; yet he does sometimes express his Passions

with as much Heat and Vehemency, as the hottest Lover of 'em all.

*Lipsius*, in the First Book of his *Variæ Lectiones*, cap. 21. styles *Tibullus* a Poet exceeding Elegant, in whose Writings the *Latin Tongue* appears according to its true and native Elegance. He says, There are some *Epigrams* concerning the Amours of *Sulpitia* and *Cerinthus*, Composed by *Tibullus*, which are indeed very Fine and Beautiful.

*Rapin*, in the Second Part of his *Reflexions*, sect. 29. remarks, That they who have Writ *Elegy* best amongst the *Latins*, are *Tibullus*, *Propertius*, and *Ovid*. He says, *Tibullus* is Elegant and Polite; *Propertius* Noble and High; and *Ovid* is to be Prefer'd to both; because he is more Natural, more Moving, and more Passionate; and thereby he has better exprels'd the Character of *Elegy* than the others.

The same Author, sect. xiv. observes to us, That *Tibullus*, otherwise so exact and polite in his *Elegies*, falls short in his *Panegyrick* of *Messala*; so hard is it to praise well.

*Julius Scaliger*, in his Sixth Book *De Poeticâ*, pag. 863. says, That *Tibullus* is almost every where Uniform, and of a Piece; that he is Consistent with himself, and sustains his Character; that he generally gives one and the same Turn to things; but yet says *Scaliger*, he is the most Polite of all that ever Writ *Elegies*. He adds, That his so often using the Infinitive Moods of the *Præterperfect Tense*, of Five Syllables, such as *Continuisse*, *Discubuisse*, *Increpuisse*, *Pertimuisse*, and many others, is a thing very unpleasant, and disagreeable.

The same Author does further remark, That the *Epigrams*, at the end of the Fourth Book, are both hard, Language, and unpleasant; And, that his Poem, where-  
in



in he praises *Messala*, is so loose, and careless, and so destitute either of Vigor, or Harmony, that 'tis Natural to believe, 'twas Publish'd before it was finish'd, and that he had not leisure to Review it.

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## Marcus Hieronymus Vida.

**A**N Excellent *Latin* Poet, Born at *Cremona*; at last Promoted to the Bishoprick of *Alba*.

His Works consist chiefly of these following Poems, his *Christias*, or Poem of the Life and Death of *Christ*, in Six Books; his three Books *De Arte Poeticâ*; his Two Books of the Care and Management of *Silk-Worms*, his Description of the Game at *Chesse*, in one Book; besides *Hymns*, *Odes*, *Bucolicks*, *Eglogues*, &c.

He Died the 27th. Day of *September* 1566. and in the 59th. Year of his Age.

*Boissardus*, in his *Icones Virorum Illustrum*, says, That *Vida* was such an excellent Poet, that in every body's Opinion, he came very near to *Virgil*; a sufficient Instance whereof, says *Boissard*, is that famous, and never enough to be admir'd Piece, his *Christias*: a Poem, which (doubtless) for Matter, Composition, and Style, ought justly to be prefer'd, to all that was ever Writ, by the best Poets of this Age.

*Lilius Gyraldus*, in his *Dialogue* of the *Poets*, tells us, That no Man in that Age, carry'd *Poetry* to so great a height as *Vida* did; without any help from the *Greeks*, following none but *Virgil*. He was, says *Gyraldus*, a

Man of a large Soul, and had a true *Poetical Genius*; but his chief *Knack* lay, in a wonderful, happy way of Disposing, and Illustrating his several Subjects.

*Julius Scaliger*, in his Sixth Book *De Poeticâ*, pag. 802, observes, That *Vida* had got a great Reputation by his Three Books *De Arte Poetica*; and that his Honour is the greater, in that he has handled this Subject, with much more *Art* and *Method* than ever *Horace* did.

But for all *Scaliger* has given so high a Character of *Vida's* Poem *De Arte Poeticâ*; yet, he is far from owning it to be an Accomplish'd Piece. For in a Letter to his Son *Sylvius*, Printed before his Seven Books *De Poetica*, agrees with him, that *Vida* is a Man of good Sense, and that he has given very good Rules and Instructions; but yet he says, they are more proper for rectifying the Errors of *Poets*, and to make them see their faults, than to Learn them the *Art* of *Poetry*, and to form their Spirit and Imagination; so that, in a Word, they are not so proper to make a *Poet*, as to form one that is already so.

He further adds, That *Vida* has (indeed) very well re-establish'd that *Order* and *Method*, which is so necessary in the *Art* of *Poetry*; which *Aristotle* had neglected, and *Horace* had perverted and spoil'd; but, that he has handled his Matter rather as a *Poet*, than like a *Master*; and, that it looks, as if it were rather intended for the *Theater*, than design'd for the *School*.

*Julius Scaliger*, in the same Book, pag. 806. remarks, That of all the several Works, that ever *Vida* Wrote, there were none, that contributed more to his Reputation, than his Two Books concerning *Silk-Worms*. This Poem, says *Scaliger*, is the King of *Vida's* Works. It is much more Correct and Elaborate than his other Poems, and does really contain more of the *Art* of *Poetry*.

That

That, says *Scaliger*, which deserves to be put in the Second Place, in the Opinion of the *Criticks*, is his Poem of the Game at *Cheffe*. The Invention, says *Scaliger*, is pretty enough, although it would better have become a Young Man, than a person of his Gravity. He gives to every thing so fine a *Turn*, that that alone might be sufficient to convince us, that he had an admirable *Genius*; and the Style of it does very much resemble that of *Virgil*.

*Borrichius*, in his *De Poetis*, pag. 107. says, That *Vida* in his two Poems concerning *Silk-Worms*, and his Description of the Game at *Cheffe*, is very exact in his Stile; that he is regular and just in the Disposition, and Ordonance of his *Fable*; equal and well proportion'd in the Distribution of his Parts; that he is full of force and vigor; that he hath a noble *Air*, even in the most minute Matters; And, to conclude, that he is every where Florid and Elegant.

*Rapin*, in the Second Part of his *Reflections* on *Aristotle's* Book of *Poesie*, sect. x. informs us, That *He*, among the *Moderns*, who has the best *Genius* to sustain all the Nobleness of Narration in *Heroick Verse*, is *Ferom Vida*, Bishop of *Alba*, in his Poem on the Death of *Jesus Christ*; And were it not (says *Rapin*) that sometimes he fell into low Expressions, and Harshnesses, like those of *Lucretius*, his Style had been Incomparable.

But the same Author, sect. 16. tells us, that *Vida* had a good *Genius* for Writing in *Latin*; that the Purity of his Style is Admirable; but, the Contrivance of his *Fable* has no Delicateness; his *Manner* holds no sort of Proportion to the Dignity of his Matter, or Subject.

As for the *Hymns*, *Odes*, *Eglogues*, and the other little Pieces Compos'd by *Vida*, we are inform'd by *Borrichius*,  
that

that they are much inferiour to his Three *Larger Poems*. Nay, *Julius Scaliger* says plainly, They are Childish and Trivial; And, that whenever he had a Mind to imitate *Catullus*, instead of reaching the Natural Graces and Beauties of that excellent *Poet*, he rendered himself mighty ridiculous.

But, if any one thinks this Censure of *Scaliger* too severe; let him then be satisfi'd with *Rapin's* Remark, who tells us, that *Vida*, in these *little Pieces*, has a *Fancy* too limited; and his *Idea* seems constrain'd, whilst he is too scrupulously imploy'd about the *purity* of his *Latin*.

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## *Publius Virgilius Maro.*

THE Prince of the *Latin Heroick Poets*; He was the Son of *Maro*, a mean Person, some say a *Potter*, Born in the Third Year of the 177. *Olympiad*, on the Fifteenth of *October*, about 67 Years before *Christ*, at *Andes*, a Village not far from *Mantua*; whence he is stil'd the *Mantuan Swan*. He died at *Brundisium*, a City of *Calabria*, in *Italy*, on the 22d. of *September*, the Second Year of the 190. *Olympiad*, in the One and Fiftieth Year of his Age.

He Wrote Ten *Eglogues* or *Bucolicks*; Four Books of *Georgicks*; and Twelve Books of *Aeneids*,

*Julius Scaliger*, in his Sixth Book *De Poetica*, pag. 765. says, That *Virgil* not only excells all *Humane Wit*; but has rais'd himself to a kind of equality with *Nature* it self.  
And

And in another place he tells us, That *Virgil* ought to be the Pattern, Rule, Beginning and End of all *Poetical* Imitation.

*Macrobius*, in the first Book of his *Saturnalia*, cap. 24. observes to us, That it is the peculiar Glory of *Virgil*, that as none by *praising* can add to him; so none by *dispraising*, can detract from him.

'Tis reported of *Cicero*, that happening in his Old Age, to light upon somewhat that *Virgil* had Wrote, who was then very Young; He, by way of Prophecy cry'd out, *Magnæ Spes altera Romæ*.

*Lilius Gyraldus* tells us, That *Virgil* was so much respected by the *Senate* and *Peop'e* of *Rome*, that at any time when they heard any of his Verses in the Theatre, every body presently stood up; and if by chance *Virgil* was present, *Cornelius Tacitus* says, They gave him the same respect, as they did to *Cæsar* himself.

*Budæus*, in his Third Book *De Asse*, remarks, That *Virgil's* Verses might very well be call'd *Golden Verses*; because he receiv'd of *Octavia*, five Pieces of Gold, for Twenty Verses.

*Donatius*, in the Life of *Virgil*, informs us, That *Virgil* us'd constantly every Morning, to Write down a great many Verses; and in the Afternoon, when he was cooler, and in better temper, he would then Correct and Amend them; And, that many times of a Hundred Verses, there would not be above half a Dozen left uncorrected; and therefore he would commonly say, that *his Works* were at first *Monstrous and Mishapen*, but like the Bear, at last he lickt them into shape.

*Rapin*, in the Second Part of his *Reflexions on Aristotles Book of Poesie*, sect. xv. says, as for the *Latin Poets*, never any possess'd all the *Graces* of *Poesie* in so eminent a degree, as *Virgil*; he has an admirable taste for what

is Natural, an exquisite *Judgment* for the Contrivance, an incomparable *delicacy* for the Numbers and Harmony of *Verseification*. The *Design* of his Poem, well consider'd in all the Circumstances, is (says *Rapin*) the most judicious, and the best devis'd that ever was, or ever will be.

*Dryden*, in his *Preface to Sylvæ: Or, The Second Part of Poetical Miscellanies*, calls *Virgil*, a succinct and grave Majestick Writer; One who weigh'd not only every Thought, but every Word and Syllable. Who was still aiming to crowd his Sense into as narrow a compass as possibly he cou'd; for which reason he is so very Figurative, says *Dryden*, that he requires, (I may almost say) a *Grammar* apart to Construe him. His *Verse* is every where sounding the very thing in your Ears, whose Sense it bears: Yet the *Numbers* are perpetually *Varied*, to increase the Delight of the Reader; so that the same sounds are never repeated twice together. But though he is Smooth where Smoothness is requir'd, yet he is so far from affecting it, that he seems rather to disdain it. For he frequently makes use of *Synalæpha's*, and concludes his Sense in the Middle of his *Verse*. He is every where above Concepts of *Epigrammatick Wit*, and gross *Hyperboles*: He maintains Majesty in the midst of Plainness; He shines, but glares not; and is Stately without Ambition, which is the vice of *Lucan*.

The same Author in his *Dedication to the Earl of Dorset*, before the *Translation of Juvenal*, pag. 6. observes to us, That *Virgil* has confin'd his *Works* within the compass of *Eighteen Thousand Lines*, and has not treated many Subjects; yet he ever had, and ever will have the Reputation of the best Poet. *Martial* says of him, that he cou'd have excell'd *Varius* in *Tragedy*, and *Horace* in *Lyrick Poetry*; but out of deference to his Friends he attempted neither.

Sir

Sir William Temple, in his *Essay of Poetry*, pag. 18. remarks, That *Homer* was without Dispute the most Universal *Genius* that has been known in the World, and *Virgil* the most Accomplish'd. To the *first*, must be allow'd, the most fertile Invention, the richest Vein, the most general Knowledge, and the most lively Expressions; To the *last*, the noblest Idea's, the justest Institution, the wisest Conduct, and the Choicest Elocution. But, says *Temple*, to speak in the *Painters* Terms, we find in the Works of *Homer*, the most Spirit, Force, and Life; in those of *Virgil*, the best Design, the truest Proportions, and the greatest Grace; The Colouring in Both seems equal, and indeed, in Both is admirable. *Homer* hath more Fire and Rapture, *Virgil* more Light and Sweetness; or at least the *Poetical* Fire was more raging in *One*, but clearer in the *Other*; which makes the *first* more amazing, and the *latter* more agreeable. The *Oare* was richer in *One*, but in t' *other*, more refin'd, and better allay'd, to make up excellent Work. upon the whole, says *Temple*, I think it must be confess'd, That *Homer* was of the Two, and, perhaps, of all others, the Vastest, the Sublimest, and the most Wonderful *Genius*; and that he has been generally so esteem'd, there cannot be a greater Testimony given, than what has been by some observ'd, That not only the greatest Masters, have found in his Works, the best and truest Principles of all their Sciences or Arts; but that the noblest Nations, have derived from them, the Original of their several Races, though it be hardly yet agreed, whether his Story be True, or Fiction. In short, says *Temple*, these Two *Immortal Poets*, must be allow'd to have so much excelled in their Kinds, as to have exceeded all Comparison, to have even extinguished Emulation, and in a manner confined true Poetry, not

only to their *Two Languages*, but to their very *Persons*. And I am apt to believe, says *Temple*, so much of the true *Genius* of *Poetry* in general, and of its *Elevation* in these *Two Particulars*, that I know not, whether of all the *Numbers* of *Mankind*, that live within the *Compass* of a *Thousand Years*; for one *Man* that is *Born* capable of making such a *Poet* as *Homer* or *Virgil*, there may not be a *Thousand* born capable of making as great *Generals* of *Armies*, or *Ministers* of *State*, as any the most *Renowned* in *Story*.

*Joseph Scaliger*, in *Scaligerana* 2. says, That *Virgil's Georgicks* are admirable, but he has taken several things from *Aristotle*. His *Æneids* are not so *Correct* as the *Georgicks*, for he intended to have *Wrote* Four and *Twenty* Books, as well as *Homer*. This the *Ancients* tell us, was the *Reason*, that *Virgil* at his *Death* *Commanded* they should be *Burnt*. *Scaliger* also informs us, That the *Verse Ergo ibit in Ignes*, was foisted in since *Virgil's* time, and that it is not of any *Ancient Date*.

*Virgil's Æneids* were so much esteem'd of by *Augustus Cæsar*, that after *Virgil's* *Death*, who had left in charge with some *Friends* to have that *Poem* burnt, he committed it to the custody and strict care of *Lucius Varius*, and *Plotius Tucca*, with *Command*, that nothing should be alter'd. Which, says *Pliny*, lib. 7. *Nat. Hist.* cap. 30. gave much a greater *Credit* and *Reputation* to the said *Poem*, than if the *Author* himself had approv'd of it.

Edmund



*Edmund Waller,*

A Gentleman not many Years Deceas'd: Whose Name will ever be dear to all Lovers of *Poetry*. His Compositions are Universally applauded; and they are thought fit to serve as a Standard, for all Succeeding *Poems*. He was a Friend to the Ingenious *Fletcher*; as appears by his Verses, Printed at the beginning of those *Plays*; and was so far a lover of *Dramatick Poetry*, that he Translated part of a Play, in which the Earl of *Dorset* and *Middlesex*, was concern'd; viz. *Pompey the Great*, a *Tragedy*, Acted by the Servants of his Royal Highness the *Duke of York*; Printed 4to. *London*, 1664.

Besides this *Play*, he has a Volume of *Poems* Extant, which have been several times Reprinted; the Fourth Edition was Printed, *Octavo*, *Lond.* 1682. There is newly Publish'd a Second Part, containing his Alteration of *The Maid's Tragedy*, and whatsoever of *his* was left unprinted, Publisht, 8vo. *Lond.* 1690.

*Waller*, a Name that carries every thing in it, that's either Great or Graceful in *Poetry*. He was indeed the Parent of *English Verse*, and the First that shew'd us our Tongue had Beauty and Numbers in it. Our Language owes more to *him*, than the *French* does to *Cardinal Richlieu*, and the whole *Academy*. The *Tongue* came into his hands, like a *Rough Diamond*; he Polish'd it first, and to that degree, that all *Artists* since him have admired the Workmanship, without pretending to mend it. *Sucklin* and *Carew*, wrote some few things

smoothly enough, but as all they did in this kind was not very Considerable, so 'twas a little later than the earliest Pieces of Mr. *Waller*. He undoubtedly stands first in the List of *Refiners*, and for ought I know, last too; for I question whether in *Charles the Second's* Reign, *English* did not come to its full Perfection; and whether it has not had its *Augustian Age*, as well as the *Latin*. It seems to be already mixt with Foreign Languages, as far as its *purity* will bear; and, as *Chymists* say of their *Menstruums*, to be quite sated with the Infusion. But Posterity will best judge of this. In the mean time, 'tis a surprizing Reflexion, that between what *Spencer* wrote last, and *Waller* first, there should not be much above Twenty Years distance; and yet the *One's* Language, like the Money of that Time, is as currant now as ever; whilst the *Other's* Words are like Old Coyns, one must go to an *Antiquary* to understand their true Meaning and Value. Such advances may a great *Genius* make, when it undertakes any thing in earnest. Some *Painters* will hit the chief Lines, and Master Strokes of a Face so truly, that through all the differences of Age, the Picture shall still bear a Resemblance. This Art was Mr. *Waller's*; he sought out, in this flowing Tongue of *Ours*, what parts would last, and be of standing use and Ornament; and this he did so successfully, that his Language is now as fresh, as it was at first setting out. Were we to judge barely by the *Wording*, we could not know what was Wrote at *Twenty*, and what at *Fourscore*. He complains indeed of a *Tyde of Words* that comes in upon the *English* Poet, o'reflows whate're he Builds: but this was less his Case than any Mans, that ever Wrote; and the mischief on't is, this very complaint will last long enough to confute it self. For though *English* be mouldring  
Stone,

*Stone*, as he tells us there; yet he has certainly pickt the best out of a bad *Quarry*.

We are no less beholding to him for the *New Turn* of *Verse*, which he brought in, and the Improvement he made in *Our Numbers*. Before his Time, Men *Rhym'd* indeed, and that was all: As for the Harmony of Measure, and that Dance of Words, which good Ears are so much pleas'd with, They knew nothing of it. Their *Poetry* then was made up almost entirely of *Monosyllables*; which, when they come together in any Cluster, are certainly the most harsh untunable things in the World. If any Man doubts of this, let him Read Ten Lines in *Donne*, and he'll be quickly convinc'd. Besides, their Verses ran all into one another, and hung together, throughout a whole Copy, like the *hook'd Atoms*, that Compose a Body in *Des Cartes*. There was no distinction of Parts, no regular Stops, nothing for the *Ear* to rest upon.— But as soon as the Copy began, down it went, like a *Larum*, Incessantly; and the Reader was sure to be out of Breath, before he got to the end of it. So that really *Verse* in those days was but down-right *Prose*, tagg'd with *Rhymes*. Mr. *Waller* remov'd all these Faults, brought in more *Poly-syllables*, and smoother Measures; bound up his Thoughts better, and in a Cadence more agreeable to the Nature of the Verse he wrote in: So that where-ever the Natural Stops of that were, he contriv'd the little breakings of his Sense so, as to fall in with 'em. And for that reason, since the stress of *Our Verse* lyes commonly upon the last Syllable, you'll hardly ever find him using a Word of no Force there. I would say, if I were not afraid the Reader would think me too nice, that he commonly closes with

*Verbs,*

*Verbs*, in which we know the Life of Language consists.

Among other Improvements, we may reckon that of his *Rhymes*: Which are always good, and very often the better for being *New*. He had a fine Ear, and knew how quickly that Sense was cloy'd by the same round of Chiming Words still returning upon it. 'Tis a decided Case by the great Master of Writing. *Quæ sunt ampla & Pulchra, diu placere possunt, quæ lepida & concinna*, (amongst which *Rhyme* must, whether it will or no, take its place) *citò satietate afficiunt aurium Sensum fastidiosissimum*. This Mr. Waller understood very well, and therefore, to take off the danger of a Surfeit that way, strove to please by Variety, and new Sounds. Had he carried this Observation (among others) as far as it would go, it must, methinks, have shewn him the incurable Fault of this *jingling* kind of *Poetry*, and have led his later Judgment to *Blank Verse*. But he continued an obstinate Lover of *Rhyme* to the very last: 'Twas a *Mistress* that never appear'd unhandsome in his Eyes, and was Courted by him long after *Sacharissa* was forsaken. He had rais'd it, and brought it to that Perfection we now enjoy it in: And the *Poet's* Temper (which has always a little Vanity in it) would not suffer him ever to slight a thing, he had taken so much pains to Adorn. See the *Anonymous Writer* of the *Preface*, before the *Second Part* of Mr. Waller's *Poems*.

Dryden, in his Dedication of *The Rival-Ladies* to the Earl of Orrery, says, That the Excellence and Dignity of *Rhyme*, were never fully known, till Mr. Waller taught it; he first made Writing easily an Art; first shew'd us to conclude the Sense, most commonly,  
in

in *Disticks*; which in the Verse of those before him, runs on for so many Lines together, that the Reader is out of breath to over-take it.

*Rimer*, in his *Short View of Tragedy*, pag. 78. observes, That though the Reformation of the *Italian* Language was begun and finish'd well nigh at the same time by *Boccace*, *Dante*, and *Petrarch*. Our Language retain'd something of the Churl; something of the *Stiff* and *Gothish* did stick upon it, till long after *Chaucer*.

*Chaucer* threw in *Latin*, *French* *Provencial*, and other Languages, like new *Stum* to raise a *Fermentation*; In *Queen Elizabeth's* time it grew *Fine*, but came not to an *Head* and *Spirit*, did not Shine and Sparkle, till *Mr. Waller* set it a *running*. And one may Observe by his *Poem* on the *Navy*, *Anno* 1632. that not the Language only, but his *Poetry* then distinguish'd him from all his *Contemporaries*, both in *England* and in other Nations: And from all before him upwards to *Horace* and *Virgil*. For *there*, besides the Language Clean and Majestick, the Thoughts New, and Noble; the Verse Sweet, Smooth, Full and Strong; the *Turn* of the *Poem* is happy to Admiration.

*Waller came last, but was the First whose Art  
Just Weight and Measure did to Verse impart;  
That of a well-plac'd Word could teach the force,  
And shew'd for Poetry a Nobler Course:  
His happy Genius did our Tongue Refine,  
And easie Words with pleasing Numbers joyn:  
His Verses to good Method did apply,  
And chang'd harsh Discord to soft Harmony.*

*All own'd his Laws; which, long approv'd and try'd,  
To present Authors now may be a Guide.  
Tread boldly in his Steps, secure from Fear,  
And be, like him, in your Expressions Clear.*

Sir **William Soame** in his Translat. of  
Boileau's *Art of Poetry*, pag. 9.

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FINIS.

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